放課後

原作／東野圭吾

漫画／霜月かよ子

KODANSHA COMICS
BETSUFURE

KCB
1674

放課後

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KC BETSUFURE

定価
本体524円(税別)
講談社

KC 別フレ

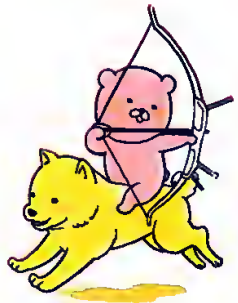
原作 東野圭吾
漫画 霜月かよ子

講談社

誰かが私を殺そうとしている。

女子高という秘密の花園で、生徒指導部の教師が殺される。
容疑者は、教師を二人きりの旅行に誘う問題児や
小悪魔的な洋弓部主将、優等生の美少女に、奔放な女教師…。
数学教師・前島は疑念を抱く…次の標的は、「自分」――!?
東野圭吾の傑作学園ミステリー、完全コミック化!!

この仕事に就いて10年目を迎える節目の年に
貴重な経験をさせていただきました。
いやはやアーチェリーは、するのも描くのも難しいです。
取材にて、普段着かペンしか持たない私は
弓を持っただけで右腕がぶるぶる震えました。
霜月かよ子



装幀／柳川貴浄夫＋大野裕介(SPICE)

HOUKAGO
"After School"

ORIGINAL STORY - Higoshino Keigo ***ARTWORK - Shimotsuki Koyoko***
(From Koudansha Publisher's "Houkago". With help from Seikei University's Archery Club.)

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SOMEONE IS TRYING TO KILL ME.
SOMEONE—

放課後

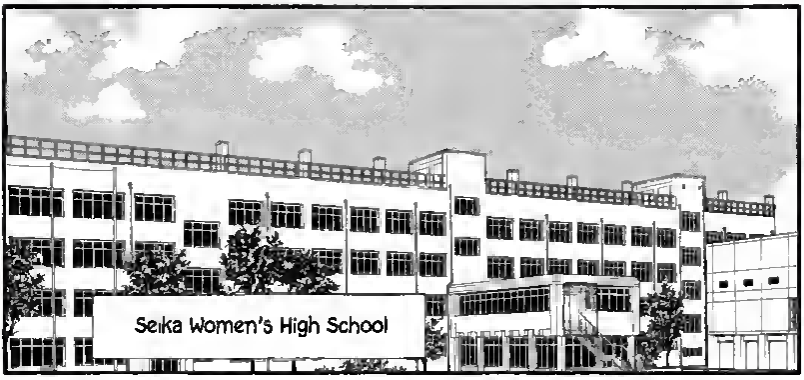
原作 東野圭吾

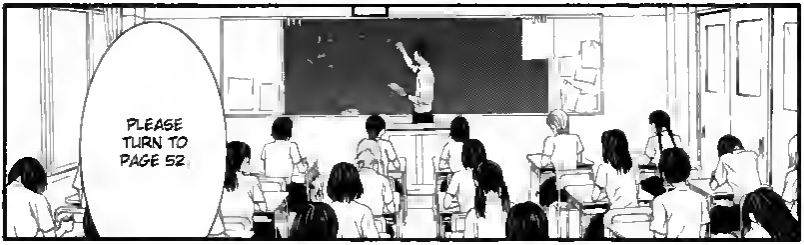
漫画 霜月かよ子

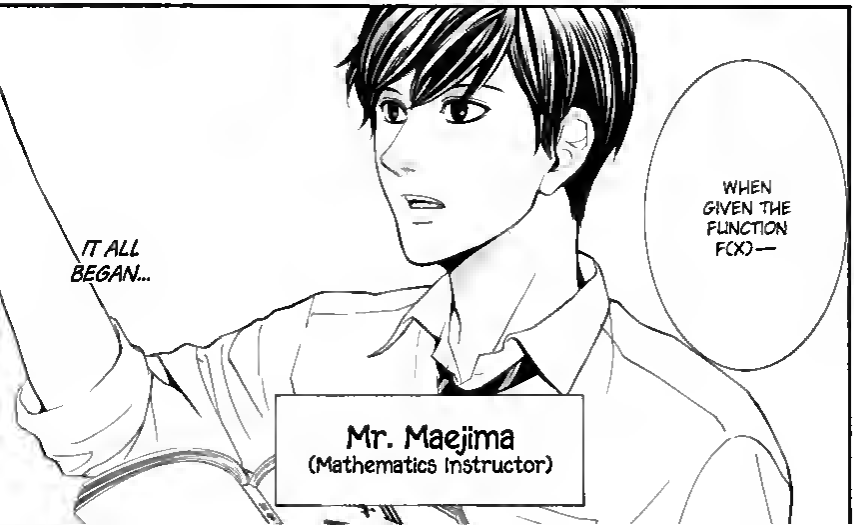
PART 1

HOUKAGO

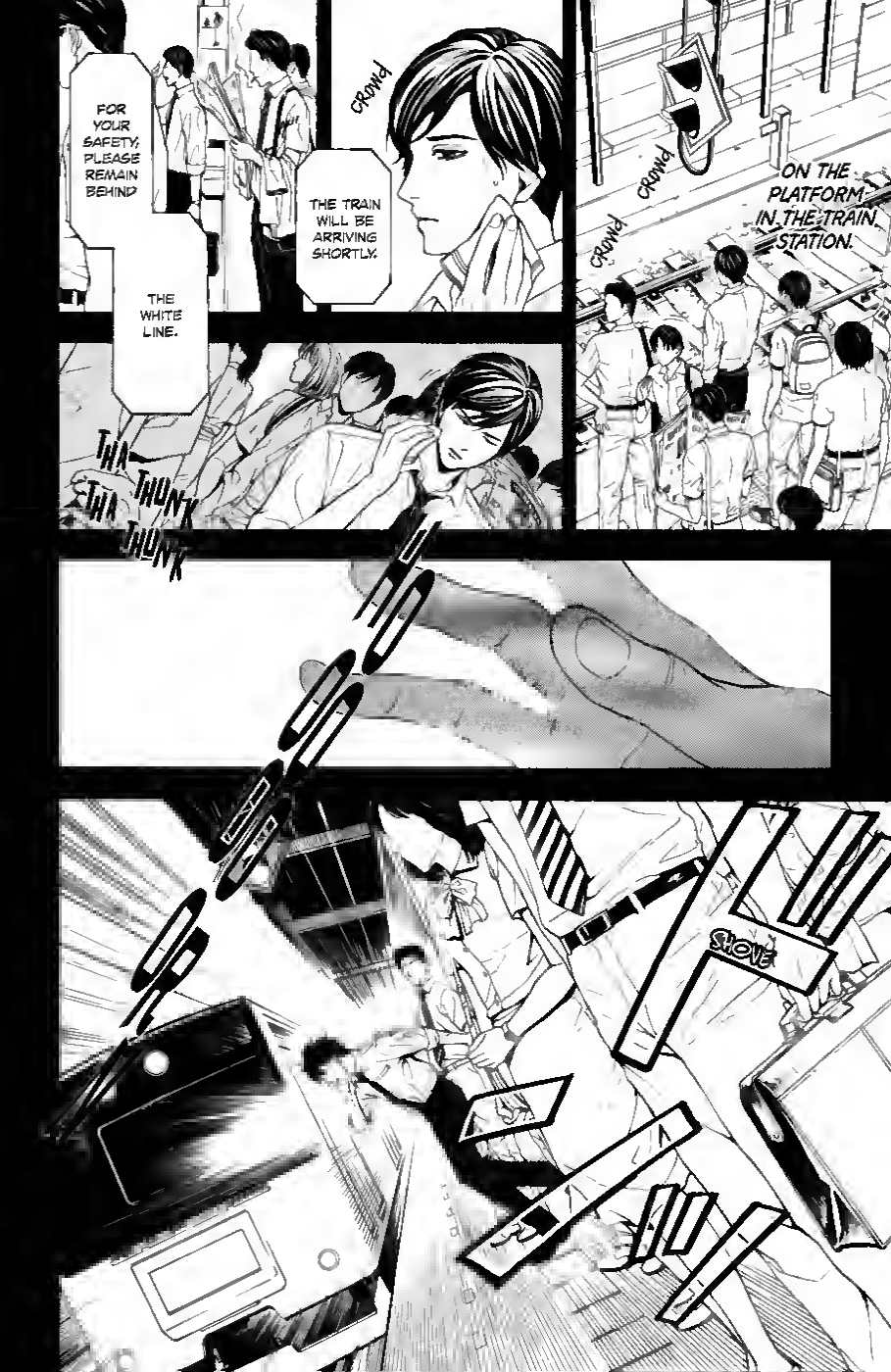
September, 198X







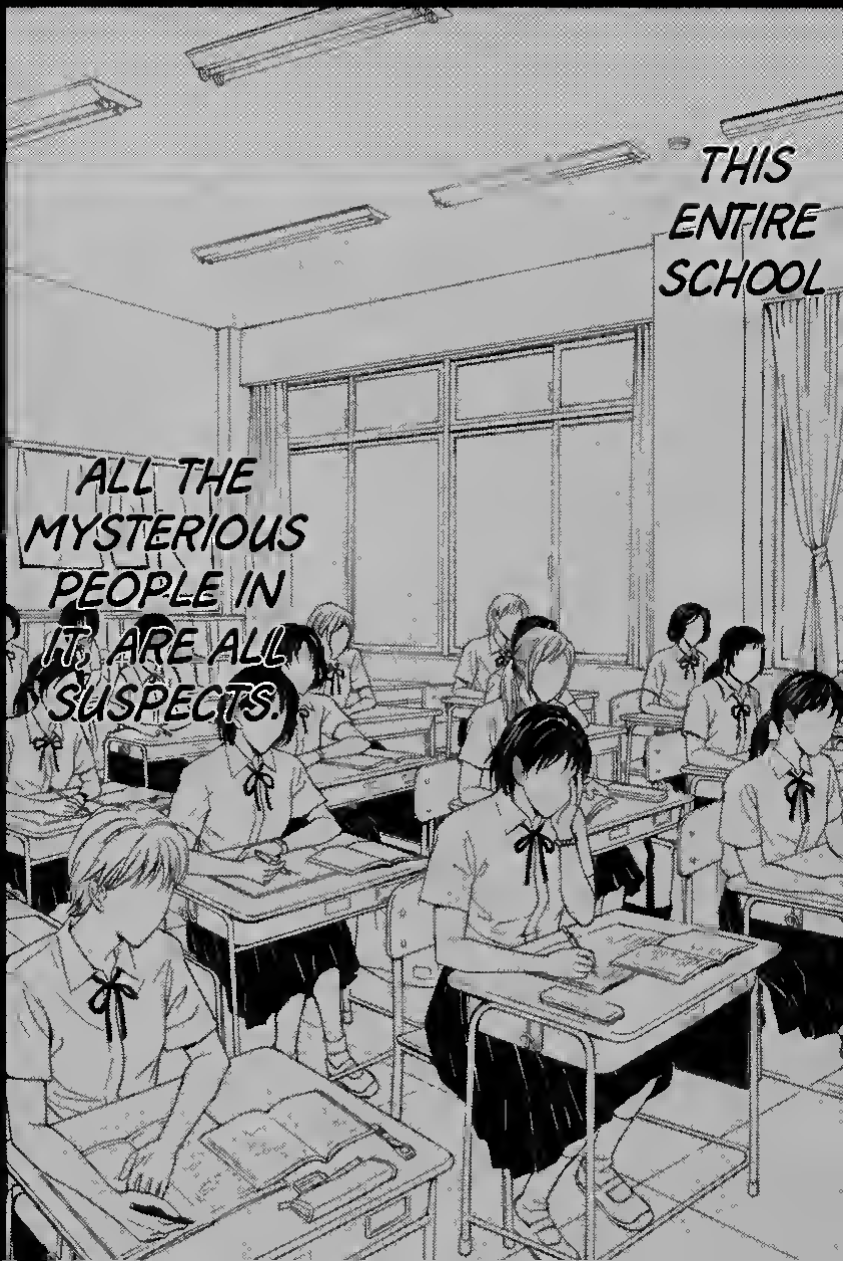
This is a work of fiction, unrelated to any real people, groups or events.


FOR YOUR SAFETY, PLEASE REMAIN BEHIND THE WHITE LINE.
THE TRAIN WILL BE ARRIVING SHORTLY.
CROWD
CROWD
CROWD
ON THE PLATFORM IN THE TRAIN STATION.
THA-THUNK
THA-THUNK
SHOVE

THA THUNK
THA THUNK
THA THUNK
THA THUNK
THA THUNK
THA THUNK
UM... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
...
YES...
THAT WAS THE FIRST ATTEMPT TO KILL ME.
THE SECOND WAS AT THE POOL AFTER SCHOOL.
Splash
Splash

SSSS
SSSS
SPLASH
SSS
!!

I KNEW IT!
CHICK
IF THIS BREAKER HAD HAD A BIGGER CAPACITY,
I'D HAVE DIED OF ELECTRO-CUTION.
THE BREAKER'S SWITCHED ITSELF OFF.
IT MUST HAVE FLIPPED BECAUSE THERE WAS ELECTRICITY RUNNING THROUGH THE WATER.
BUT...
THIS KIND OF FORTUNE CAN'T LAST FOREVER.
AND YESTERDAY, THERE WAS THAT INCI-DENT WITH THE POT OF GERANIUMS.
SURVIVING THREE TIMES NOW... MY LUCK'S BEEN GOOD SO FAR.


THIS ENTIRE SCHOOL
ALL THE MYSTERIOUS PEOPLE IN IT, ARE ALL SUSPECTS.

rattle
rattle
rattle
clack
Takahara Youko
(3rd year, class C)
step
step
step
THUNK
TAKAHARA YOUKO...
rustle
SHE'S CUT HER HAIR

SHE AND I DON'T WORK WELL TOGETHER.
WHAT WAS IT? SMOKING, RIGHT?
LOOKS LIKE HER SUSPENSION PERIOD'S OVER.
shiver
shiver
shiver
APPARENTLY, MURAHASHI'S THE ONE WHO FOUND HER
OF ALL THE PEOPLE! HAHA—
cough
AS THE NEXT STEP,
I'LL BE USING SUBSTITUTION TO FIND THE ANTI-DERIVATIVE...
Mr. Murahashi
(Head of Student Discipline)
SHE'S MAKING A MOCKERY OF OUR SCHOOL!
CRUSH
FUME
UNBELIEVABLE!
LATE FOR CLASS THE DAY AFTER GETTING OFF SUSPENSION!

SHE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THAT VERMIN LIKE HER AREN'T WELCOME IN THIS SCHOOL!
MUTTER
I KNEW THREE DAYS OF SUSPENSION WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH.
MR. MAEJIMA! YOU SHOULD ALSO MAKE AN EFFORT TO DISCIPLINE HER!
I'M SORRY.
MUTTER
WHY IN THE WORLD DOES SHE EVEN BOTHER COMING HERE?
SHE'S ACTUALLY QUITE A TYPICAL CASE.
SIGHING
Mr. Hase
NOW NOW, MR. MURAHASHI...
HE GIVES THE KIDS MONEY AND LEAVES THEM TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES. IT'S THE WORST KIND OF ENVIRONMENT FOR A CHILD TO GROW UP IN!
NO MOTHER, AND A FATHER WHO'S TOO BUSY WORKING;
rustle
TUG
OH, RIGHT— YOU WERE TAKAHARA'S HOMEROOM TEACHER LAST YEAR.
SHE WASN'T THIS BAD WHEN SHE WAS A SECOND-YEAR, THOUGH.

I SUPPOSE THE BEST WAY TO PUT IT,
WOULD BE TO CALL HIM "THE MODEL HEAD OF SCHOOL DISCIPLINE."
sigh
A STUDENT'S CALLING FOR YOU, MR. MURAHASHI.
BUT YOU MUST KNOW HOW SOME KIDS TEND TO RUN OFF THE RAILS AT THE MOST IMPORTANT PERIOD OF THEIR SCHOOL LIFE
YOU KNOW HOW TAKAHARA WAS CAUGHT SMOKING?
MR. MURAHASHI'S THE ONE WHO FOUND HER OUT.
scratch scratch
STOP THIS NONSENSE!
SO THAT'S WHY...

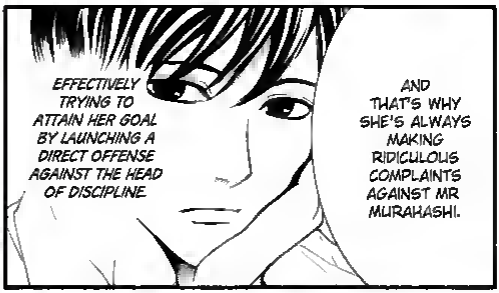
GO BACK TO CLASS!
THEN CLARIFY IT FOR ME!
HOJO, AGAIN.
WHAT'S THE PROB-LEM HERE?
PUSH
SO YOU'RE DENYING THAT YOU'RE AT FAULT?
Hojo Masami
(3rd year, Class A advanced placement)

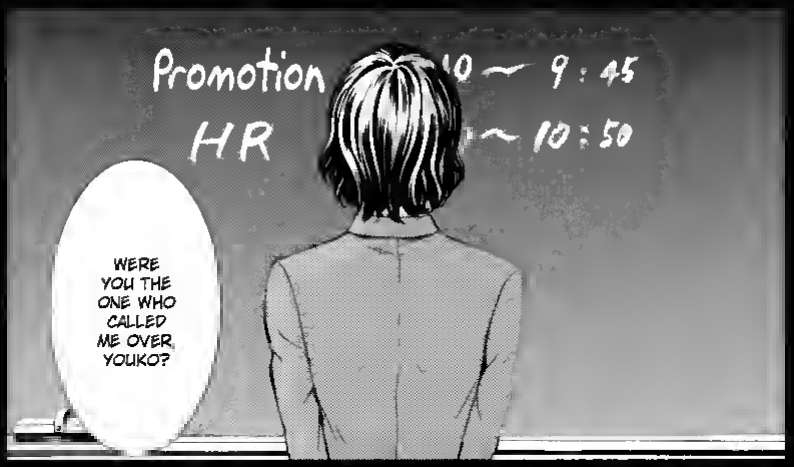
APPARENTLY, MR. MURAHASHI BERATED THE CLASS USING FOUL LANGUAGE LIKE "YOU BASTARDS",
SO I THINK SHE'S HERE TO CORRECT HIM.
HUH...
HOJO'S BEEN TOP OF HER CLASS SINCE DAY ONE, AND SHE'S THE HEAD OF THE KENDO CLUB ON TOP OF THAT.
THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT SHE'S HONOUR STUDENT MATERIAL.

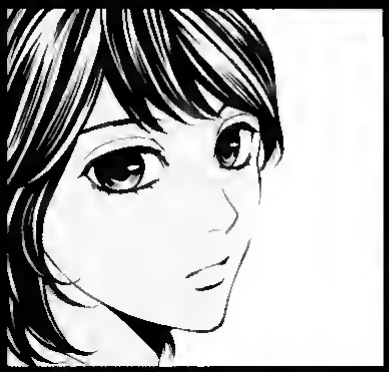
I'M PRETTY SURE THAT AROUND THE BEGINNING OF MARCH,
SHE STARTED INSTIGATING GROUP ACTIVITIES...
GEARED TOWARDS "DESTROYING MEANINGLESS SCHOOL RULES".

A WELL-THOUGHT OUT PLAN, AS EXPECTED OF AN HONOUR STUDENT.

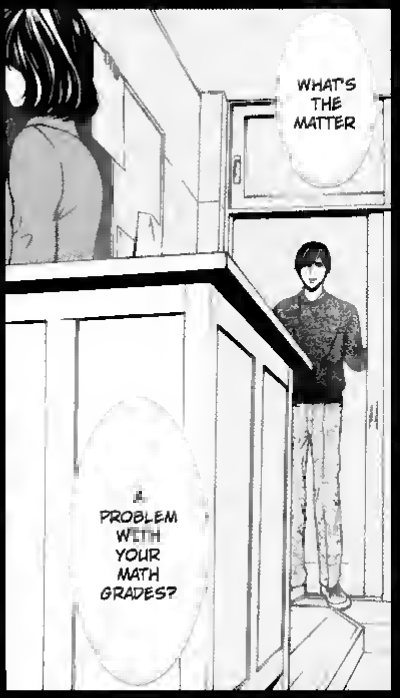
AND AROUND THE END OF MARCH, TAKAHARA YOUKO...


AND THAT'S WHY SHE'S ALWAYS MAKING RIDICULOUS COMPLAINTS AGAINST MR MURAHASHI.
EFFECTIVELY TRYING TO ATTAIN HER GOAL BY LAUNCHING A DIRECT OFFENSE AGAINST THE HEAD OF DISCIPLINE


Promotion
HR
9:45
10:50
WERE YOU THE ONE WHO CALLED ME OVER YOUKO?



BDMP
I NEED TO ASK YOU A FAVOR.


WHAT'S THE MATTER
A PROBLEM WITH YOUR MATH GRADES?

WITH ME.
I WANT YOU TO COME TO SHINSHU
Station M
Departure: 9:00
3/25 No. 351
Nagano
Arrival: 12:22
Train 7 #5
hand

I'LL HOLD A GRUDGE FOREVER!
IF YOU DON'T COME,

I BROKE MY PROMISE TO YOUKO
MARCH 25TH, DAY OF THE PLANNED TRIP TO SHINSHU.
RI—NG
HAAH...
...
CLACK
HELLO?
RI—NG
RI—NG
...
RI—NG

...
...
crowd
crowd
...IS THIS YOUKO?
..
squeeze
WERE YOU WAITING ALL THIS TIME?
YOUKO ...?
crowd
crowd
I HEARD THIS FROM MY STUDENTS.

I SEE SO THAT'S WHY SHE'S BEEN SO DISTURBED LATELY
I KNOW SHE'S NOT ANYONE'S ROLE MODEL, BUT SHE HAS HAD HER FAIR SHARE OF TROUBLES.
OUT OF THE BLUE, HER FATHER HAD FIRED THIS HOUSE-KEEPER,
AND BROUGHT HIS YOUNG LOVER TO LIVE AT HOME WITH THEM.
AS MR. MURAHASHI WAS SAY-ING,
AFTER HER MOTHER PASSED ON, YOUKO WAS CARED FOR BY THEIR HOUSE-KEEPER.
REBUFFED HER.
AND I JUST..
PRINCIPAL
YES, I'LL GO AND SEE HIM IMMEDIATELY.
MR. MAEJIMA!
THE PRINCIPAL WOULD LIKE A WORD WITH YOU.

HOW IS THE ARCHERY CLUB DOING?
Mr. Kurihara
EVERY-THING'S GOING WELL, I HOPE?
WELL... THE CLUB'S DOING FINE.
BUT...
IS THERE A PROBLEM?
I WAS TARGETED AGAIN.
YESTERDAY, WHEN I WAS WALKING ON CAMPUS AFTER SCHOOL, A POT CRASHED DOWN; IT BARELY MISSED ME.
...
I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN WANTING TO REPORT THESE THINGS TO THE POLICE,
BUT YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THESE ARE MERELY DELINQUENT ACTS.
THIS IS ..
AREN'T THEY SIMPLY UNFORTUNATE COINCIDENCES?

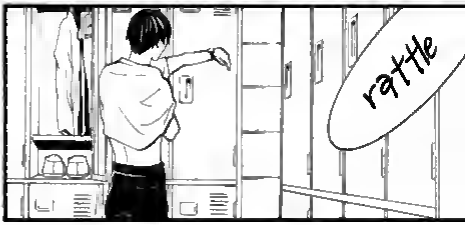
...
WHAT IS THAT EXPRESSION ON YOUR FACE?
IT'S NOTHING.
TO THESE KIDS, IT'S JUST A FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT.
NO ONE'S SERIOUSLY MAKING AN ATTEMPT ON YOUR LIFE.
SQUEEZE
SLAM
FLINCH
SO YOU DON'T TRUST IN YOUR OWN STUDENTS?!
AND WHAT HAPPENS IF THE "NEXT TIME" TURNS OUT TO BE SUCCESSFUL?
ALL RIGHT.
UNTIL AT LEAST ONE MORE "ATTEMPT" IS MADE, MAYBE? DEPENDING ON THE CONSEQUENCES, I'LL REPORT IT.
WHY DON'T YOU TRY WAITING A LITTLE LONGER?
HUH?

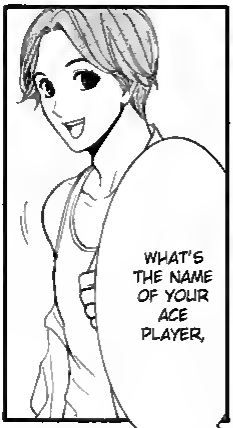
I'D BE GRATEFUL IF YOU COULD HELP ME.
YOU WANT MY HELP?
TAKA-KAZU WILL BE 25 THIS YEAR,
AND I NEED TO FIND SOME-ONE GOOD FOR HIM... SOON.
COUGH
I'VE CALLED YOU OVER HERE TO ASK A FAVOR
FOR MY SON, TAKA-KAZU.
STEP
STEP
YES, BECAUSE THE PERSON I HAVE IN MIND IS..
SIFT
KYOKO ASO.
Kyoko Aso
(English Instructor)

IS THIS SOMETHING I NEED TO TELL YOU, MR. MAEJIMA?
HE ALSO TOLD ME TO THOROUGHLY RESEARCH EVERY RELATIONSHIP YOU'VE MAINTAINED.
THE PRINCIPAL ASKED ME TO AFFIRM YOUR FEELINGS.
YOU'VE BEEN HOLDING BACK ON GIVING AN ANSWER FOR THREE WEEKS?
I'LL TELL THE PRINCIPAL MYSELF.
STEP
STEP

OH?
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE YOU'VE PARTICIPATED IN THE CLUB!
Mr. Fujimoto
(Tennis Coach)

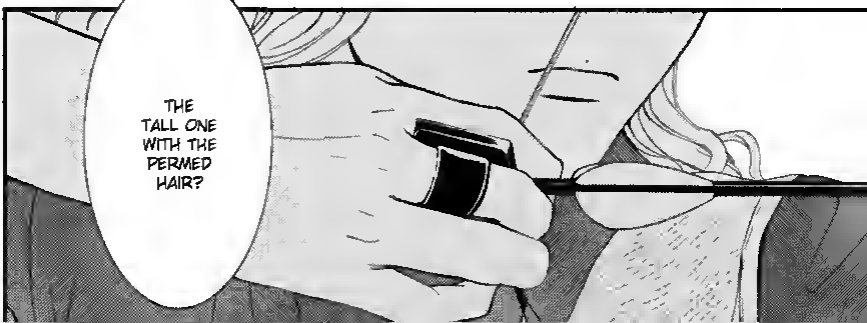
The Next Day— After School


rattle

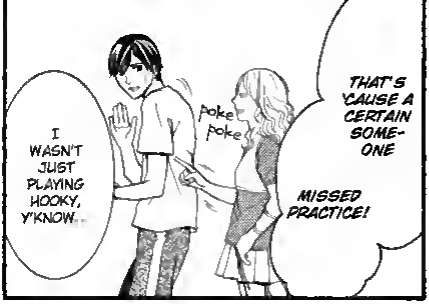

WHAT'S THE NAME OF YOUR ACE PLAYER,

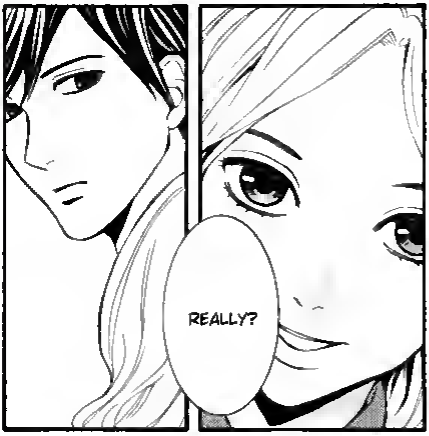
I GUESS IT'S A 50-50 CHANCE.
YOU GUYS ARE DOING WELL! THE NATIONALS AREN'T FAR OFF!
clatter
OH, SO MODEST, AS ALWAYS!

SINCE I STARTED BEING TARGETED, I'VE AVOIDED THE CLUB.
YEAH.


THE TALL ONE WITH THE PERMED HAIR?

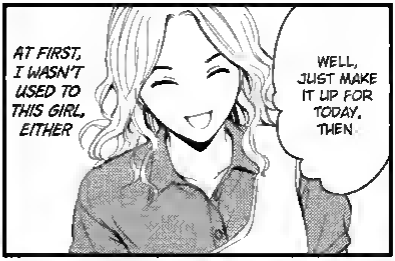
WHIP
POW
HAA...
YOU'RE HERE AT LAST!
Keiko Sugita
(3rd year, class B)
KEI.
step
step

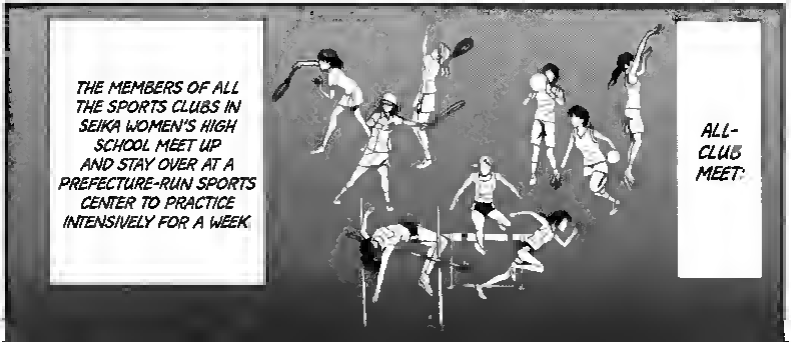

I WASN'T JUST PLAYING HOOKY, Y'KNOW...
Poke poke
THAT'S CAUSE A CERTAIN SOME-ONE
MISSED PRACTICE!


REALLY?

HOW'S EVERYONE DOING?
NOT TOO GOOD WE DON'T HAVE MUCH HOPE THIS YEAR.
whip
whip
Nice shot!

BUT AFTER THE ALL-CLUB MEET THAT SUMMER...


AT FIRST, I WASN'T USED TO THIS GIRL, EITHER
WELL, JUST MAKE IT UP FOR TODAY, THEN


THE MEMBERS OF ALL THE SPORTS CLUBS IN SEIKA WOMEN'S HIGH SCHOOL MEET UP AND STAY OVER AT A PREFECTURE-RUN SPORTS CENTER TO PRACTICE INTENSIVELY FOR A WEEK.
ALL-CLUB MEET!

YOU'RE WORKING HARD.
ANALYZING DATA THIS LATE AT NIGHT?
THOSE ARE TODAY'S SCORES?
I'M MAKING A GRAPH OF THE PAST THREE DAYS SO THAT WE CAN ANALYZE OUR WEAKNESSES BETTER.
YEAH.
MY RECORD
LOOKS PRETTY WEAK. I'M DOING WORSE THAN USUAL.
clatter
HUH.
LET'S SEE.

TIME FOR LIGHTS-OUT.
YOU NEED TO REST, OR THE HEAT WILL GET TO YOU.
CLATTER
GUESS I NEED MORE TRAINING
YOUR TIMING IS GOOD, THOUGH, SO YOU'LL GET BETTER.
...YOUR BALANCE IS OFF.
...HEY.
WHAT IS IT?
...
HUH...
PRETTY SUDDEN QUESTION, ISN'T IT?
AND NO, NOT REALLY. WE AREN'T NEWLYWEDS, AFTER ALL.
ARE YOU SORRY YOUR WIFE'S NOT HERE?

THEN...
touch
DOES IT HURT, HERE?
KEI, ARE YOU DRUNK?
COME TO THINK OF IT...
sniff sniff
YOU REEK OF ALCOHOL!

patter
patter
patter
CLICK

IT'S MR. MAEJIMA. GOOD WORK TODAY!
YOU'RE WITH SUGITA, DISCUSSING PRACTICE, THEN, NO DOUBT. YOU'RE BOTH SO HARD-WORKING.
creak
OH!
Mr. Takei
(Track Coach)
YOU AND MR. MURAHASHI ARE GOING AROUND MAKING CHECKS?
YES.
SHUT
...
THAT... TOTALLY KILLED THE MOOD.
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
WE'LL BE OFF, THEN.

SHOULD I... APOLOGIZE FOR WHAT I DID?
...
YOU MEAN JUST NOW? WHAT FOR?
IT FEELS LIKE I BROKE SOME UNSPOKEN RULE.
NOT TRUE. I'VE NEVER THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS BEING HELD DOWN BY RULES...
YOU'RE PRETTY STRONG, KEI.
WELL, THEN-- GOODNIGHT, MR. MAEJIMA

WHAT'S WRONG? HAS SHE CAUGHT A COLD?
OH, GEEZ!
The Next Day
MIYASAKA'S THE ONLY ONE WHO'S ABSENT TODAY
EVEN AFTER THAT INCIDENT,
SHE KEPT TALKING TO ME AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED.
YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON
WHEN A GIRL SAY'S "SHE'S NOT FEELING WELL".
MIYASAKA? SOMETHING WRONG?
PUNCH!
GOOD, YOU'RE IN BETTER FORM NOW.

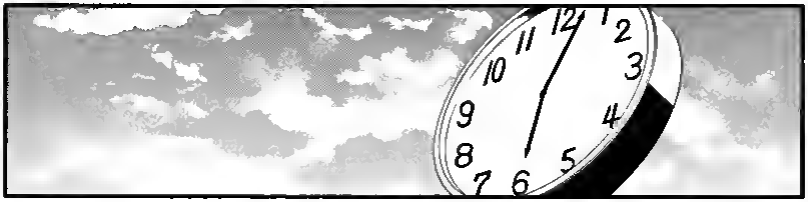
I SEE BUT THAT'S SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS TO EVERYONE
BUT, THINK OF IT AS JUST A SPORT AND IT'LL MAKE YOU FEEL MUCH BETTER
AT THE VERY LAST MOMENT ...
I CAN'T HELP HESITATING.
Emi Miyasaka
(1st year, class A)
Whip
Whip
ALL RIGHT
IF YOU'RE SCARED, CLOSE YOUR EYES BEFORE YOU LET GO.
Whip
tense

HOW'S YOUR WRIST?
I HEAR YOU SPRAINED IT IN THE MEET.
THAT WAS GOOD.
OKAY
sigh
MR. MAEJIMA! AREN'T YOU GOING TO COACH US?
FINE.
YES, BUT I'M...
HOW'D I DO?
CONSIDERABLY BETTER THAN YOU DID IN THE MEET.
TAP TAP TAP
ALL RIGHT! LET'S GRAB A 10-MINUTE BREAK NOW.
CROWD
CROWD

HEY, KANAE! STOP BEING RIDICULOUS!
I DON'T REMEMBER GIVING HER ANYTHING LIKE THAT.
A CHARM?
Kanae
(3rd year, class D)
KEI'S BEEN DOING WELL EVER SINCE YOU GAVE HER THAT GOOD LUCK CHARM!
OH, THAT! I REMEMBER!
SMILE
IT'S LONGER AND COOLER THAN OURS!
SHE MEANS THIS.
YOU KNOW, THE ARROW I BEGGED YOU FOR.

MR. MAEJIMA, GIVE ME ONE FOR GOOD LUCK, TOO!
SNATCH
KANAE, STOP IT.
CLUNK
SURE, GO AHEAD. I LEFT THEM IN THE CLUB ROOM— TAKE SOME IF YOU WANT.

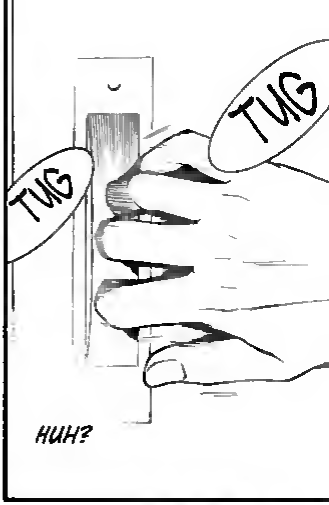
EVERYONE! COME BACK AND START DOING STRETCHES!
AH!
IT'S 5 MINUTES PAST BREAK TIME.

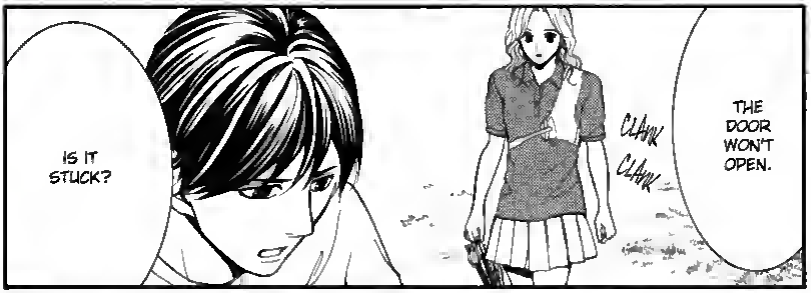


THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK.
CLANK
CLANK

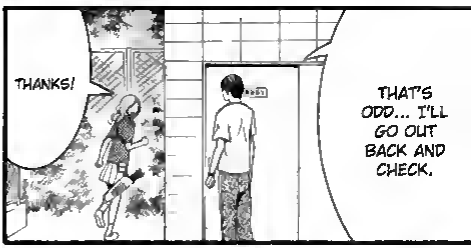
I DIDN'T DO ANY-THING WORTH BEING THANKED FOR.
YOUR BEING THERE IS GOOD ENOUGH.
IS THAT REALLY TRUE?
clank
clank
HEY...
Men's Lockers
YOU'LL BE COMING TOMORROW, RIGHT?
I'LL TRY.
Men's L
pfft!
JUST "TRY"?!
IF YOU'RE REALLY IN CHARGE, YOU BETTER SHOW UP!
clank
clank
FINE, FINE. SEE YOU LATER.
GRAB

TUG
WHY WON'T THIS OPEN?
TUG
WHAT'S WRONG?
TUG


TUG
TUG
HUH?


IS IT STUCK?
CLANK CLANK
THE DOOR WON'T OPEN.

CLANK
CLANK
MR. MAE-JIMA!
THERE'S A BAR ACROSS THE DOOR KEEPING IT SHUT!


THANKS!
THAT'S ODD... I'LL GO OUT BACK AND CHECK.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS THING?
IT WASN'T THIS DIFFICULT TO OPEN THE LAST TIME I DID IT..

CAN YOU ACTUALLY SEE IT?
YEAH.
THERE'S DEFINITELY A BAR STUCK IN THERE.
DOESN'T THAT MEAN..
SOMEONE'S IN THERE?
BUT .. WHO'D DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS?

Women's Lockers
男性用ロッカー
Men's Lockers
PLEASE SPEAK UP IF YOU ARE!
WHAM
WHAM
IS ANYONE THERE?!
SILENCE

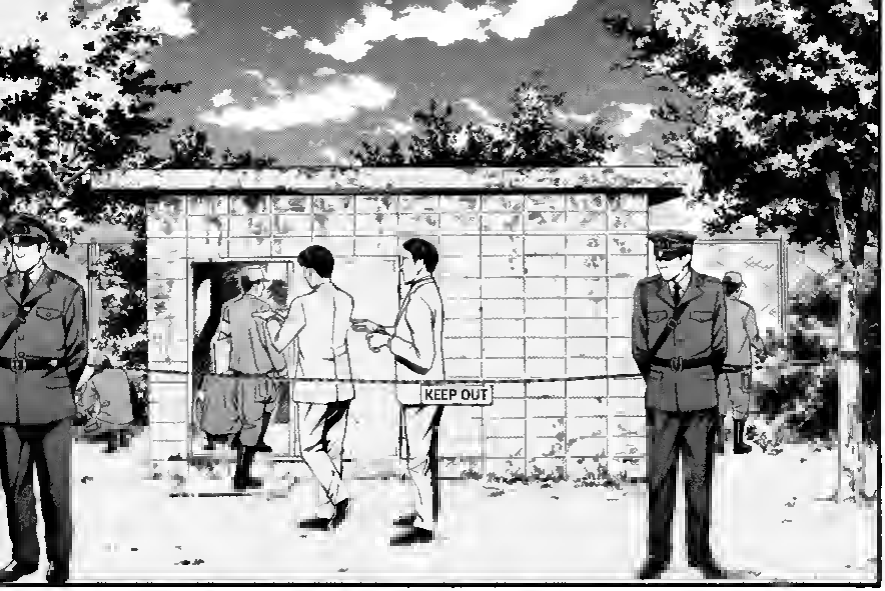
WE SHOULD BREAK IT OPEN.
Men's Lockers
SLAM
GO!
Men's Lockers
CRACK!
BAM
Men's Lockers
CRACK!

SLAM

OW...
cough
YOU ALL RIGHT, KEI?
THAT HURT...

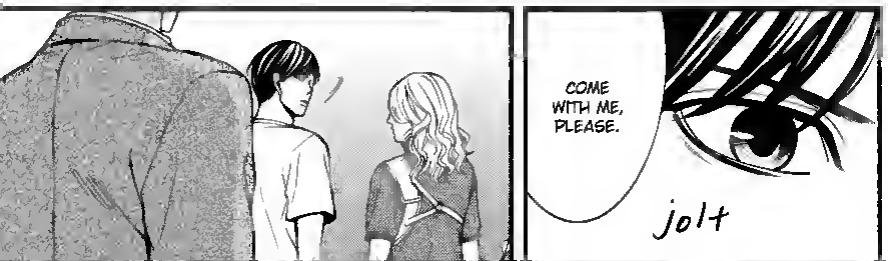
THERE'S SOMEONE...
UNDER THE VENT!
cough
...IS SOMEONE THERE?
MR. MAEJIMA
KEI, GET THE PHONE.
WHO'RE YOU GOING TO CALL?
THE HOSPITAL, OR... NO.
THE POLICE.
IS HE DEAD?
PROBABLY.
WHO... IS HE?
GULP

MR.
MURAHASHI.


KEEP OUT

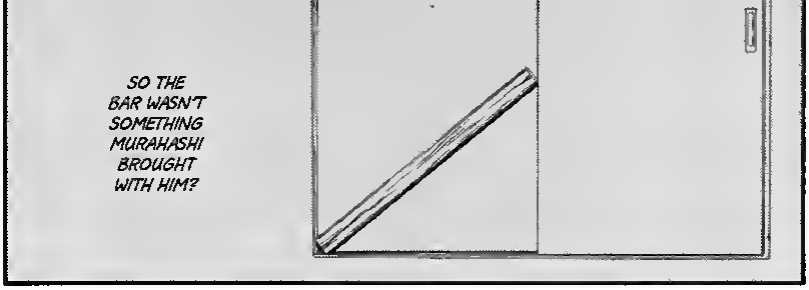
I NEVER IMAGINED

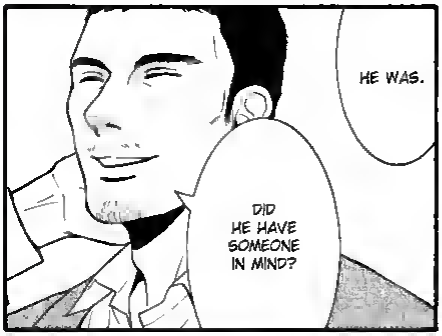
THAT AN INCIDENT LIKE THIS COULD OCCUR AT SCHOOL.

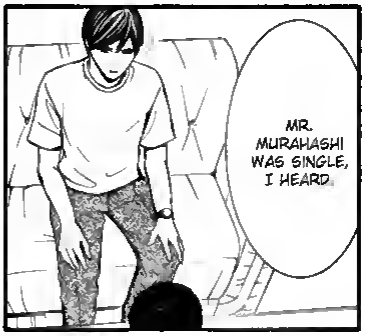

COME WITH ME, PLEASE.
jolt

WOULD YOU MIND?
Smile
MY NAME IS OHTANI.
Detective Ohtani
MEETING ROOM
SO,
BECAUSE THE DOOR WOULDN'T BUDGE, YOU RESORTED TO KICKING IT IN?
I'M MAEJIMA.
MAY I ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS?

Women's Lockers
50 CM
THERE'S ABOUT 50 CENTIMETERS OF SPACE FROM CEILING TO THE DIVIDER BETWEEN THE MEN'S AND WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOMS.
IT WAS PROBABLY LEFT OPEN FOR THE PURPOSE OF VENTILATION, BUT THERE'S ENOUGH SPACE FOR SOMEONE TO SQUEEZE THROUGH.
Men's Lockers
THAT DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHY THE WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOM WAS SECURELY BARRED, THOUGH
THAT MEANS. .
Scratch
HAS THAT BAR ALWAYS BEEN THERE?
NO, I'VE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE.
TRUE...
MUST'VE BROUGHT IT IN.
SOMEONE...


SO THE BAR WASN'T SOMETHING MURAHASHI BROUGHT WITH HIM?

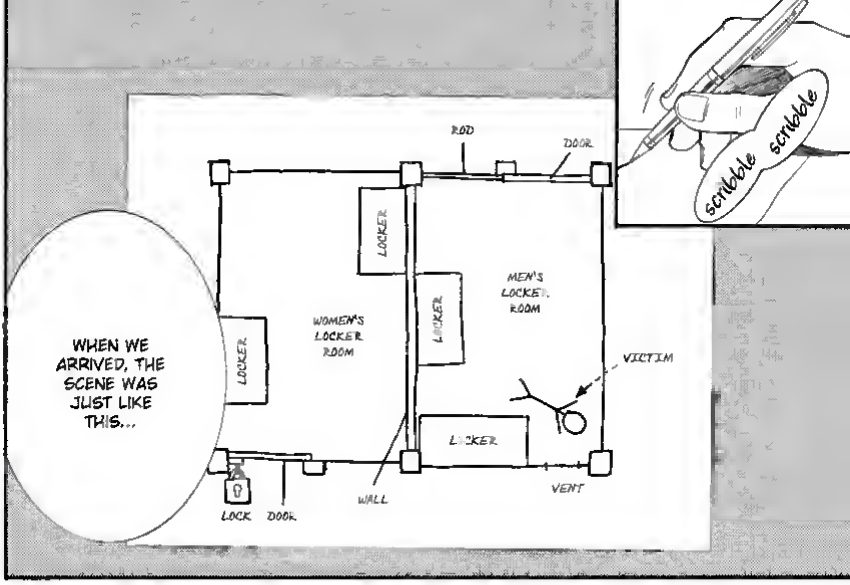

HE WAS.
DID HE HAVE SOMEONE IN MIND?

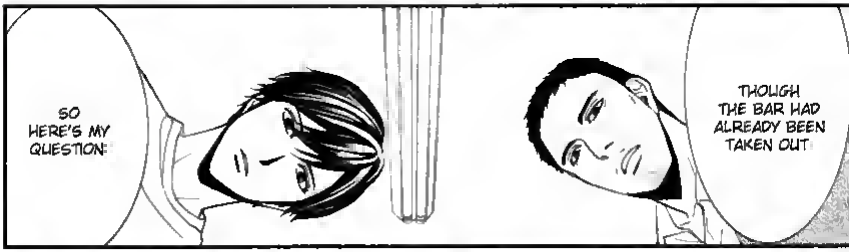

MR. MURAHASHI WAS SINGLE, I HEARD.

WHY DOES THAT EVEN MATTER?
I HAVE NO IDEA
NO GIRL-FRIENDS?
NO, I HAVEN'T HEARD OF ANYONE.

WHAT WAS THE CAUSE OF DEATH?
SO...

...DOES MR. MURAHASHI USE THAT LOCKER ROOM?
NO.
HE DOESN'T COACH ANY SPORTS.
THERE'RE ONLY A FEW TEACHERS WHO USE THAT LOCKER ROOM.
SO YOU'RE TELLING ME THAT MR. MURAHASHI, WHO NEVER USES THESE LOCKER ROOMS,
WENT INSIDE TODAY, OF ALL THE DAYS, AND...
I WONDER WHAT ALL OF THIS MEANS.
WHO KNOWS? I THINK THIS IS PRETTY MYSTERIOUS, MYSELF.
THIS MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE INCIDENT ITSELF,
YEAH
BUT COULD I ASK YOU A FEW QUES-TIONS ABOUT THE LOCKER ROOMS?
HUH...
BY THE WAY...
...


WHEN WE ARRIVED, THE SCENE WAS JUST LIKE THIS...
ROD
DOOR
LOCKER
LOCKER
LOCKER
WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOM
MEN'S LOCKER ROOM
VICTIM
LOCKER
LOCK
DOOR
WALL
VENT
scribble scribble


SO HERE'S MY QUESTION:
THOUGH THE BAR HAD ALREADY BEEN TAKEN OUT

I SEE. IN WHICH CASE, MR. MURAHASHI COULD'VE ENTERED FREELY.
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO, BUT... NO ONE EVER DOES.
IT'S A HASSLE GETTING THE KEYS FROM THE STAFF OFFICE AND THEN HAVING TO RETURN THEM.

Women's Lockers
THERE'S A LOCK ON THE WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOM DOOR,
BUT NOT ON THE MEN'S, AREN'T PEOPLE ACCUSTOMED TO LOCKING IT?

!
THERE WAS A PAPER CUP NEXT TO THE BODY.
THE CAUSE OF DEATH WAS CYANIDE POISONING.
WE THINK THAT ITS CONTENTS WERE MIXED WITH A CYANIDE-BASED COMPOUND.
SO IT'S..
SUICIDE?!

WE'RE HOPING THAT IT IS.

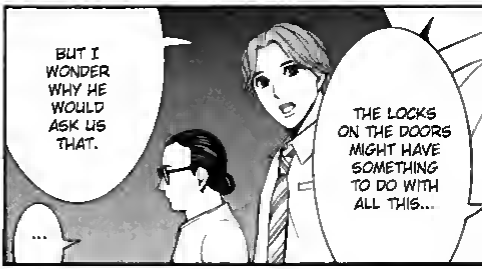
WHAT'D THEY ASK YOU, MR. MAEJIMA?

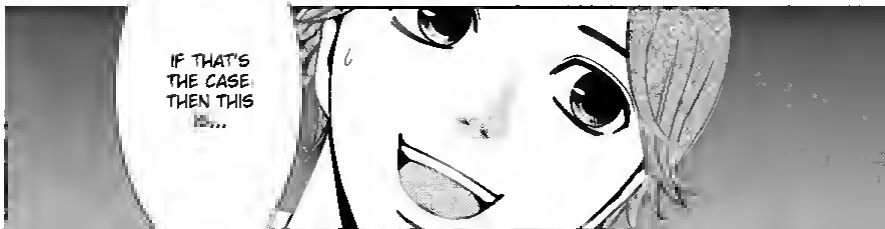
WOW... THAT WAS PRETTY DISTURBING!

THE SITUATION WE FOUND HIM IN. AND THEY ASKED ME TO CONFIRM THAT I WAS THE ONE WHO CALLED THE POLICE.
THAT'S WHAT I SAID, TOO. WHY DID THEY ASK YOU, KEI?
A LOVER, HUH? I HAVE NO IDEA WHETHER HE DID OR NOT.
AND IF MR. MURAHASHI HAD A LOVER... THINGS LIKE THAT.
ABOUT THE LOCKS ON THE DOORS,
A LOT OF THINGS.
THAT WAS MY ANSWER
AFTER CLASS, WE WENT BACK TO THE STAFF OFFICE TO GRAB THE KEYS
AROUND 3:45, UNLOCKED AND WENT INTO THE LOCKER ROOM.
AROUND 4, LEFT THE ROOM, LOCKING ITS DOORS AT THAT TIME, I (MS. HORI) HAD THE KEYS WITH ME.
AND THEY ASKED ME IF I NOTICED ANYTHING DIFFERENT ABOUT THE LOCKER ROOMS.
IT'S ODD THAT THE LOCKERS CLOSEST TO THE DOOR WERE SOAKING WET TODAY.
MAINLY ABOUT...
MS. HORI, WHAT DID THEY ASK YOU?
THE LOCKS.
Ms. Hori
(Volleyball Coach)

I HAVE A FEELING THE DETECTIVE THINKS THAT
MR. MURAHASHI WAS MURDERED.

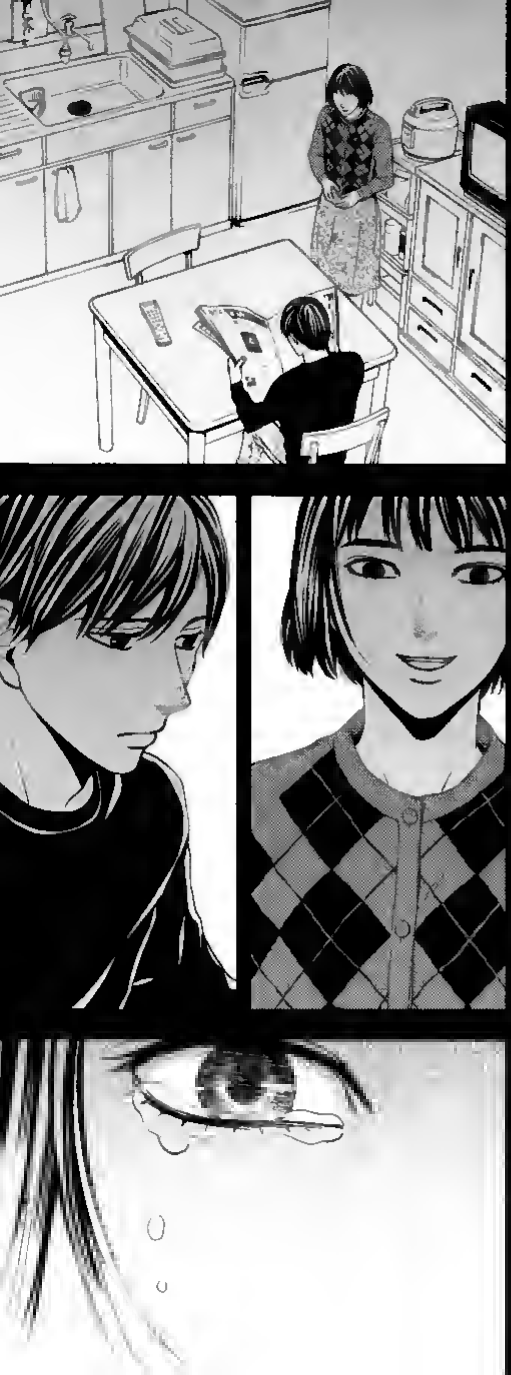
I WAS USING THE LOCKER ROOM UNTIL 3,
BUT EVERYTHING WAS NORMAL. I DIDN'T NOTICE ANYTHING ODD.
BUT THAT WAS IT. NOTHING VERY SIGNIFICANT.


BUT I WONDER WHY HE WOULD ASK US THAT.
...
THE LOCKS ON THE DOORS MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH ALL THIS...


IF THAT'S THE CASE THEN THIS IS...

...A "LOCKED ROOM MURDER".
DING DONG
click
click
click
YES?
WELCOME HOME!
Wife, Yumiko

SET
SO, WAS IT REALLY SUICIDE?
I'M BACK.
206
MAEJIMA
CLICK
WELL ...
THIS MUST BE A REAL CRISIS FOR HIS FAMILY...
YES
I'M NOT SURE ABOUT THAT.
IT'LL BE IN TOMOR-ROW'S PAPER, I GUESS.
I DON'T WANT HER TO CARRY ANY MORE BURDENS...
LIKE SHE HAD TO BACK THEN...
BUT IF I TELL HER THAT, SHE'LL DEFINITELY BE VERY WORRIED...
I'M BEING TARGETED, TOO...

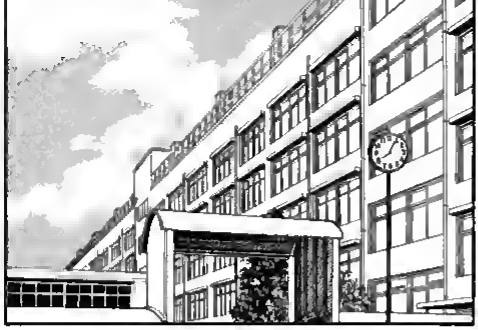

Two years ago—
BUT YOU'RE TERMINAT-ING IT, RIGHT?

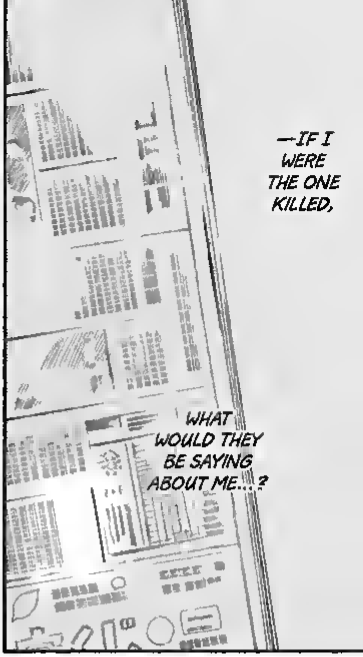
BUT HONESTLY, I FELT AN EMOTION CLOSE TO FEAR WHEN I REALIZED THERE WOULD BE SOMEONE SO GREATLY AFFECTED BY MY OWN DECISIONS.

ON THE SURFACE, IT'S FINANCIAL TROUBLES THAT FINALIZED THAT DECISION.

BUT YUMIKO'S FINALLY REGAINED SOME OF HER CHEERFULNESS.

THA-THUNK
THA-THUNK
THA-THUNK
HON-ESTLY ...
PSHHHH
ISN'T IT A RELIEF MURAHASHI'S GONE?
SERI-OUSLY, HE WAS SUCH A PERVERT UNDER-NEATH THAT MASK.
IT'S OBVIOUS HE WANTED TO "DO IT".
AN UPPERCLASS-MAN I KNOW HAS NICE BOOBS, AND SHE KNEW HE STARED SO SHE'D HIDE BEHIND HER TEXTBOOK
SERI-OUSLY?
ha ha ha ha




—IF I WERE THE ONE KILLED,
WHAT WOULD THEY BE SAYING ABOUT ME...?

AH,
MR. MAEJIMA.
RATTLE

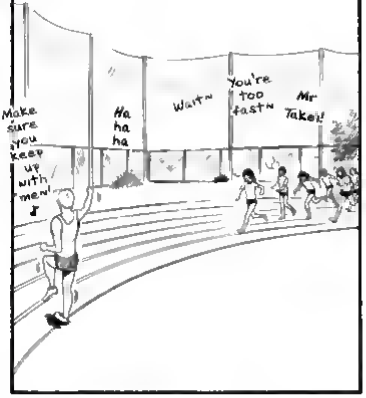
That's right.

THE DETECTIVE FROM LAST TIME IS HERE.
Thud

OHTANI, I THINK...

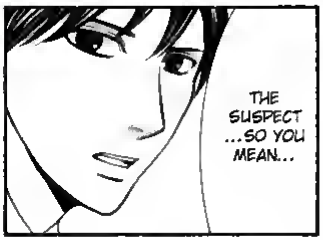
SQUEAK
SQUEAK

Rustle
KEEP OUT
Women's Lock
THE LOCK IS GONE... DID THE DETECTIVE TAKE IT WITH HIM?
Rustle
!
THERE AREN'T ANY TRICKS TO THE DOOR.

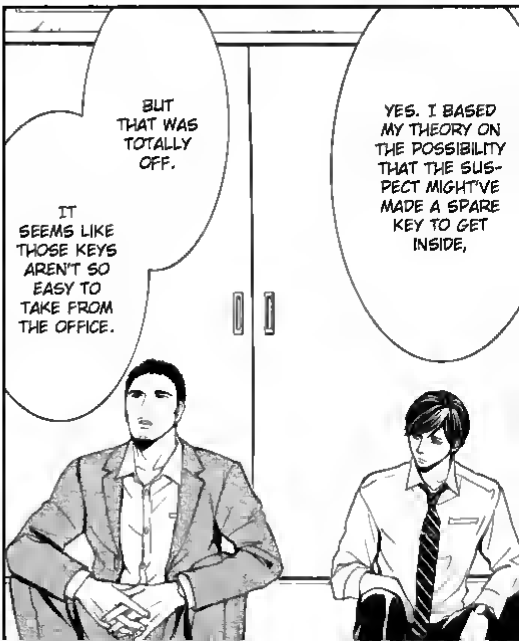

Make sure you keep up with me!
Ha ha ha
Wait~
You're too fast~
Mr Takei!

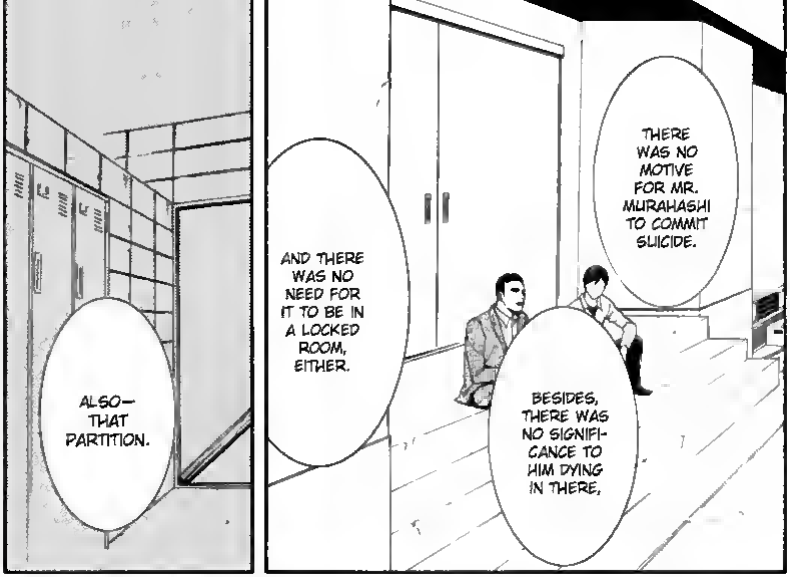
I'VE SEARCHED IT THOROUGHLY.

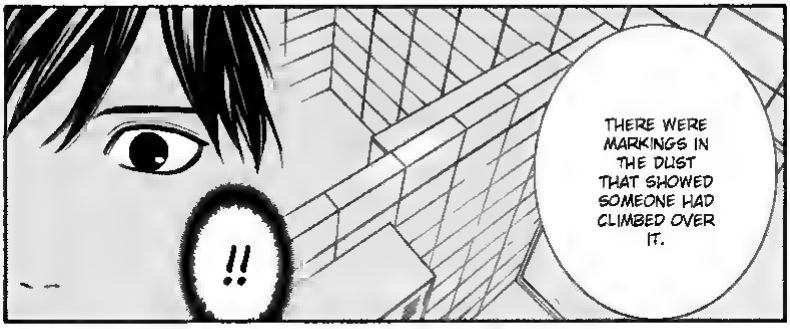
I HEARD YOU WERE ASKING QUESTIONS AT THE STAFF OFFICE.

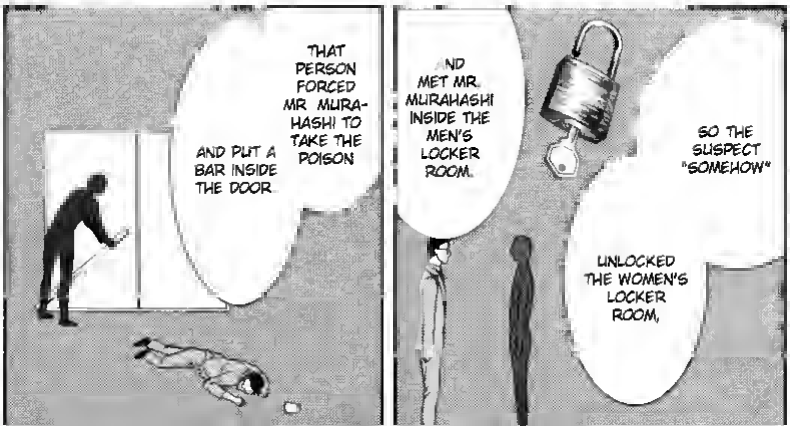

THE SUSPECT ...SO YOU MEAN...

IT'S A HOMICIDE.
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.

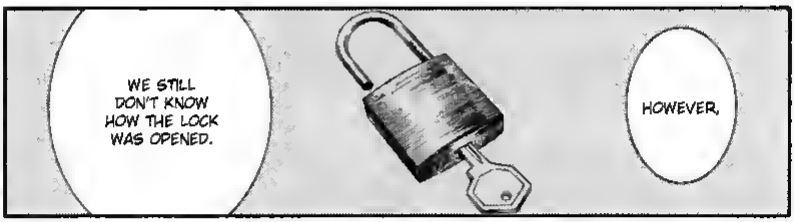

BUT THAT WAS TOTALLY OFF.
IT SEEMS LIKE THOSE KEYS AREN'T SO EASY TO TAKE FROM THE OFFICE.
YES. I BASED MY THEORY ON THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SUSPECT MIGHT'VE MADE A SPARE KEY TO GET INSIDE,


ALSO— THAT PARTITION.
AND THERE WAS NO NEED FOR IT TO BE IN A LOCKED ROOM, EITHER.
THERE WAS NO MOTIVE FOR MR. MURAHASHI TO COMMIT SUICIDE.
BESIDES, THERE WAS NO SIGNIFI-CANCE TO HIM DYING IN THERE,

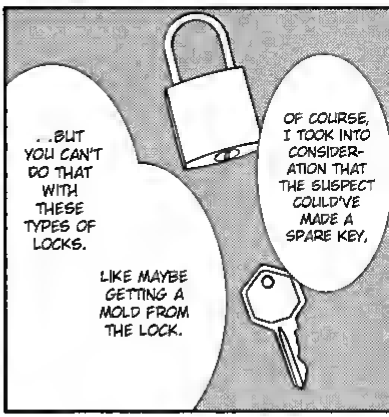

!!
THERE WERE MARKINGS IN THE DUST THAT SHOWED SOMEONE HAD CLIMBED OVER IT.


THAT PERSON FORCED MR MURA-HASHI TO TAKE THE POISON
AND PUT A BAR INSIDE THE DOOR
ND MET MR. MURAHASHI INSIDE THE MEN'S LOCKER ROOM.
SO THE SUSPECT "SOMEHOW"
UNLOCKED THE WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOM,

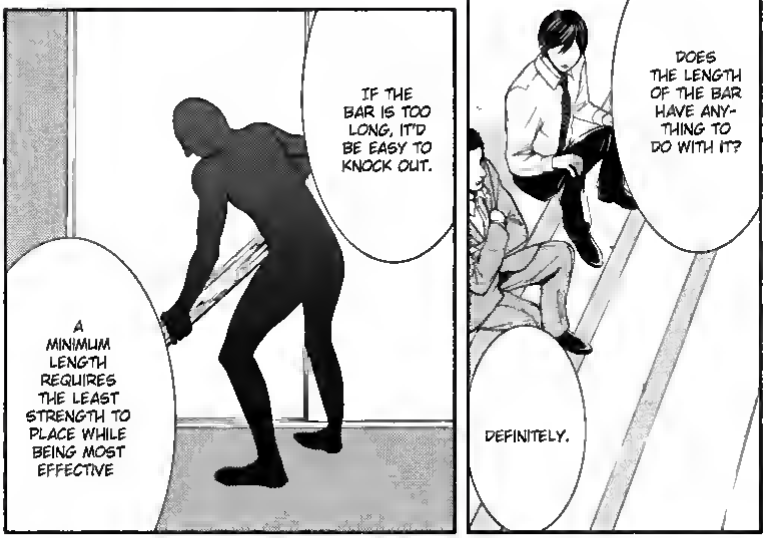
Women's Locker
click
AFTER LOCKING THE DOOR AS IT WAS BEFORE.
AND ESCAPED SUCCESS-FULLY
LATER, THE SUSPECT CRAWLED OVER THE DIVIDE TO THE WOMEN'S SIDE,


WE STILL DON'T KNOW HOW THE LOCK WAS OPENED.
HOWEVER,

DOES THAT MEAN THE SUSPECT LEFT THROUGH THE MEN'S ROOM...?
MAYBE THERE WAS STRING ON THE BAR THAT THE SUSPECT COULD TUG ON TO PUT IT IN PLACE.


...BUT YOU CAN'T DO THAT WITH THESE TYPES OF LOCKS.
LIKE MAYBE GETTING A MOLD FROM THE LOCK.
OF COURSE, I TOOK INTO CONSIDER-ATION THAT THE SUSPECT COULD'VE MADE A SPARE KEY,

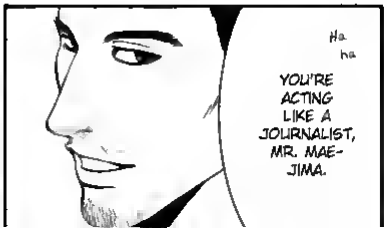
AND WITH A BAR THAT LENGTH, A SIG-NIFICANT AMOUNT OF FORCE WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PUT IT IN PLACE. IT'S JUST NOT FEASIBLE.
THERE WERE NO SIGNS OF ANYTHING BEING ATTACHED TO THE BAR,
IMPOSSIBLE.

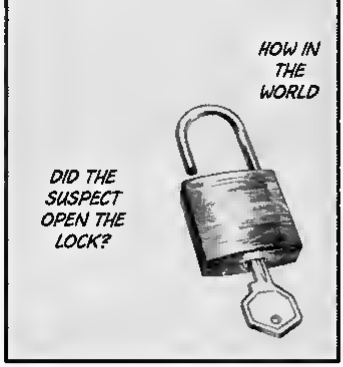

DOES THE LENGTH OF THE BAR HAVE ANY-THING TO DO WITH IT?
DEFINITELY.
IF THE BAR IS TOO LONG, IT'D BE EASY TO KNOCK OUT.
A MINIMUM LENGTH REQUIRES THE LEAST STRENGTH TO PLACE WHILE BEING MOST EFFECTIVE

...THE POLICE WOULD'VE ALREADY CONSIDERED
POSSIBILITIES LIKE THIS, HUH...

NO FINGERPRINTS— THE SUSPECT MUST'VE BEEN WEARING GLOVES, OR COVERED THEIR FINGERTIPS WITH GLUE.
NOTHING WAS FOUND ON THE OLD PIECE OF WOOD USED AS A BAR,
AND ONLY MS. HORI'S FINGER-PRINTS WERE FOUND ON THE LOCK.

HOW ABOUT FINGER-PRINTS?


Ha ha
YOU'RE ACTING LIKE A JOURNALIST, MR. MAE-JIMA.

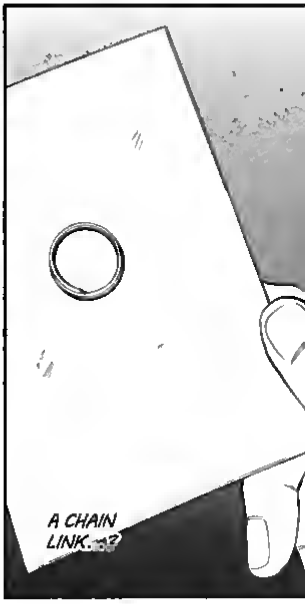

HOW IN THE WORLD
DID THE SUSPECT OPEN THE LOCK?

SO HOW WAS THE SUSPECT ABLE TO ESCAPE FROM THE WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOM?
I SEE...

DO YOU REMEMBER THIS?
Rustle
TAKE A LOOK AT THIS

IT'S A POSSI-BILITY.
DID THE SUSPECT DROP IT?

NO... I DON'T.


A CHAIN LINK...?

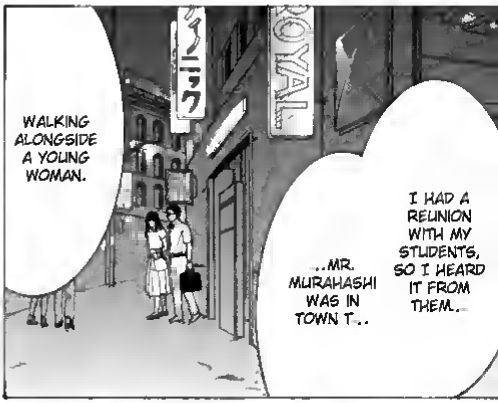
AH YES,
AND THERE WAS SOMETHING INTERESTING INSIDE THE VICTIM'S POCKET..
INTER-ESTING?

A RUBBER
THAT MEN USE.
?
THIS.
BUT—
"DID HE HAVE SOMEONE IN MIND?"
IS THAT WHAT THAT QUESTION WAS ABOUT?
I ASSUMED HE HAD A CERTAIN SOMEONE IN MIND. THAT'S WHY I ASKED YOU.
BECAUSE HE HAD ONE OF THOSE IN HIS POCKET.

MR MAEJIMA,
WHAT WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT WITH THE DETECTIVE?
It's definitely about what happened, right?
THAT CONDOM HAS NO FINGERPRINTS ON IT,
AND THAT'S WHAT BOTHERS ME...
HUH?
What do you mean?
Tired
?
...I WISH I WERE AS CAREFREE AS YOU...
MS. ASO MUST THINK IT WAS A CLEVERLY PLANNED ROBBERY—
EVERYONE'S WORRIED ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED!
MS. ASO JUST ASKED ME IF ANY OF MR. MURAHASHI'S PERSONAL BELONGINGS WERE STOLEN.

DID YOU GET ANY NEW INFORMATION, MR. MAE-JIMA?
click
click
...IS IT REALLY
JUST THAT?
NO.. NOT REALLY.
click
WHO KNOWS... THERE ISN'T ANY SOLID EVIDENCE FOR IT.
I HEARD THE DETECTIVE THOUGHT MR. MURAHASHI HAD A LOVER.
BUT, I...
KNOW ABOUT IT.
I SEE ..

IS THAT... TRUE?
YES...
AND BASED ON THE DESCRIPTIONS FROM THE ALUMNI, SHE SOUNDS UNCANNILY SIMILAR TO


ROYAL
WALKING ALONGSIDE A YOUNG WOMAN.
I HAD A REUNION WITH MY STUDENTS, SO I HEARD IT FROM THEM...
...MR. MURAHASHI WAS IN TOWN T...

MS. ASO.

RUSTLE

THE PERSON WALKING WITH MURA-HASHI
WAS REALLY KYOKO ASO...
—IF
DONG
DING
I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE KYOKO ASO WAS ACTUALLY IN LOVE WITH HIM.
EVEN IF THOSE TWO WERE INVOLVED AND MURAHASHI WAS HEAD OVER HEELS OVER HER, I BET SHE WOULDN'T FEEL THE SAME...
—NO.
IN AUGUST, MR. KURIHARA ARRANGED FOR A MARRIAGE BETWEEN HER AND HIS SON.
WHICH [illegible] LIKE A CINDERELLA STORY.
BUT SHE ALREADY HAD A LOVER, MURAHASHI ...
BECAUSE—

LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO OUR NEW TEACHER.
KYOKO ASO.

SHE CAME TO THIS SCHOOL THREE YEARS AGO.

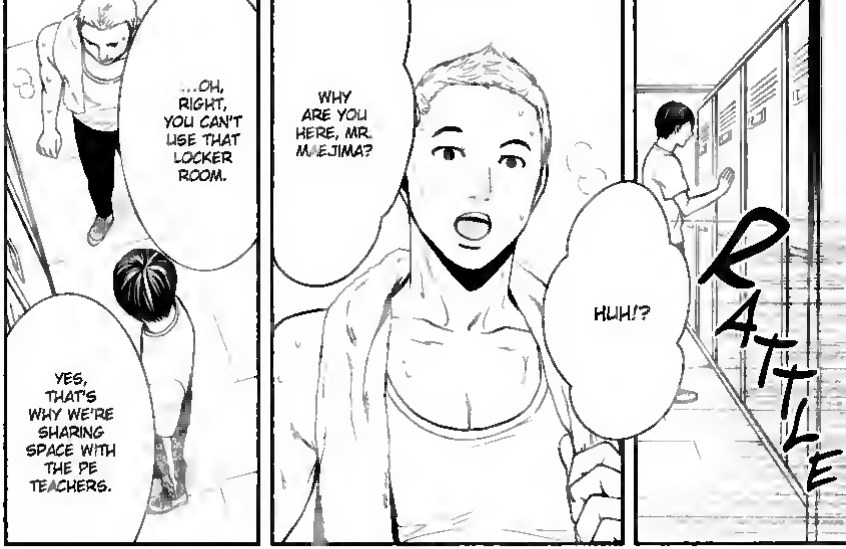
MY FRIEND K INSTANTLY FELL FOR HER.
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU.

WELL,
TOMORROW'S AN EARLY DAY FOR ME. SO I'LL GET GOING.
SO I TOOK K ALONG.
THAT DAY SHE INVITED ME FOR A DRINK.

I LET THOSE TWO HAVE SOME TIME ALONE.
SORRY.
WAIT ...
YOU'RE LEAVING ALREADY?
AFTER THAT... WE ALMOST WENT ALL THE WAY.
glug glug
THE NEXT DAY.
I WAS THINKING OF PROPOSING TO HER SOON.
—IT WAS UNEXPECTED.

I CHEERED K ON.
THAT'S GREAT.
BUT...
Slam
SHE SAID IT WITH SUCH A DISGUSTED FACE.
NOT ONLY THAT...
SHE TOLD ME IT WAS JUST A FLING...

K LEFT THE SCHOOL.
SHE SAID THAT A MARRIED MAN LIKE YOU WOULD'VE BEEN A BETTER TARGET.
SHE SAID ANYONE WAS FINE.
BUT... DIDN'T SHE HAVE SOME FEELINGS FOR YOU?
—AFTER THAT
Dressing Roo
Coaches
I NEVER THOUGHT WELL OF KYOKO ASO.
SO HE BECAME AN OBSTACLE TO HER CINDERELLA STORY.
I DOUBT SHE WAS TRULY IN LOVE WITH MURAHASHI.
SHE'S A DANGEROUS, ADVENTURE-LOVING WOMAN.
I'M ALSO IN HER WAY.
AND SINCE I KNOW HER PAST...
RATTLE
KYOKO ASO HAD A MOTIVE FOR KILLING HIM.
IF THOSE TWO WERE REALLY GOING OUT ...


...OH, RIGHT, YOU CAN'T USE THAT LOCKER ROOM.
YES, THAT'S WHY WE'RE SHARING SPACE WITH THE PE TEACHERS.
WHY ARE YOU HERE, MR. MAEJIMA?
HUH!?
RATTLE

I TOTALLY FORGOT ABOUT IT.
THE SCHOOL FESTIVAL ...
hustle
hustle
THEY'RE PLOTTING TO MAKE US TEACHERS DRESS UP TOO.
THIS YEAR WE'RE ALL IN A COS-TUME PARADE.

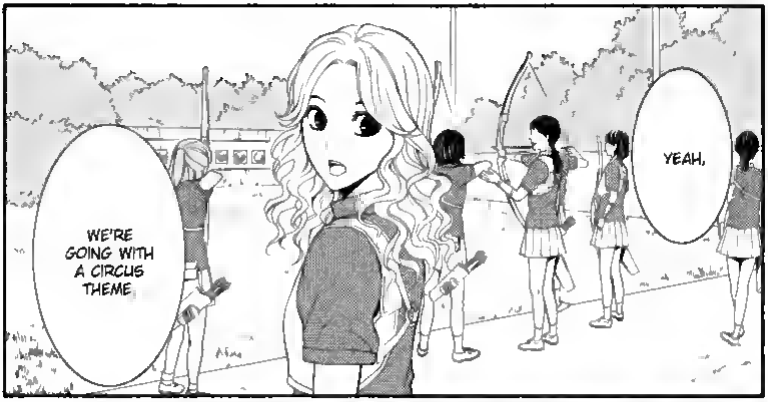
YOU'RE ALWAYS SO SPIRITED, MR. TAKEI. ARE YOU DONE FOR THE DAY YET?

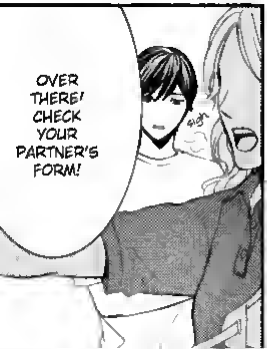
NO, THERE'S GOING TO BE A MEETING ABOUT THE SCHOOL FESTIVAL.

BUT THAT ONLY MEANS I'M DIRTIER THAN THE REST OF THEM.
WE'RE WIPING MUD ON OUR FACES AND DRESSING IN TATTERED CLOTHES... AND I'M THEIR LEADER

DRESSING UP, HUH...
WE'RE ALL GOING TO DRESS AS ZOMBIES.

AND MS. HORI'S GOING TO BE A PLAYBOY BUNNY.
MR. FUJIMOTO'S CROSS-DRESSING,


WE'RE GOING WITH A CIRCUS THEME
YEAH,

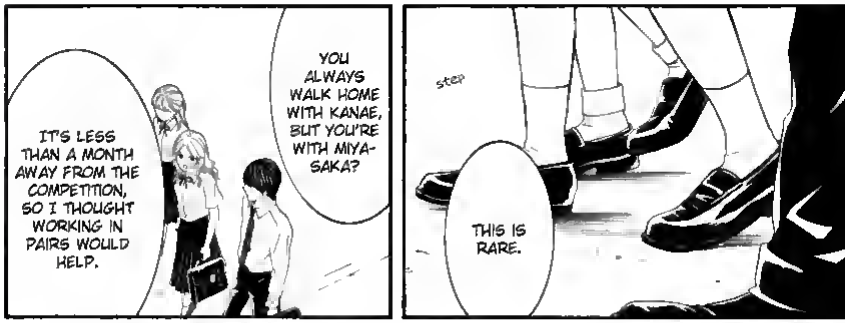

OVER THERE! CHECK YOUR PARTNER'S FORM!

SOMETHING LIKE THAT, BUT BETTER. JUST WAIT AND SEE.
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE FORCING ME TO WEAR A LION SUIT.
CIRCUS?
YOU KNOW, LIKE ANIMAL TAMERS AND MAGICIANS.

ANYWAY,
YOU LOOK AS BORED AS EVER.
WHY DON'T YOU TRY SHOOTING FOR ONCE?
Wave
Wave
Tug
ALRIGHT!
I'LL SHOW YOU MY ARTISTIC FORM, THEN!
Clench
DON'T LAUGH IF I MISS.

whip
POW
clap
clap
whoaa
... WHEW.
clap
clap

YEAH... I HAVE SOME-THING TO DISCUSS.
WERE YOU WAITING FOR US?
I'm honored~


IT'S LESS THAN A MONTH AWAY FROM THE COMPETITION, SO I THOUGHT WORKING IN PAIRS WOULD HELP.
YOU ALWAYS WALK HOME WITH KANAE, BUT YOU'RE WITH MIYA-SAKA?
step
THIS IS RARE.

PLUS, WE CAN GIVE ADVICE TO 1ST YEARS THAT HAVE NEVER BEEN IN COMPETI-TIONS.
WE CAN CHECK OUR FORMS IF 1ST AND 3RD YEARS ARE PAIRED UP, RIGHT?
YUP.
DID YOU COME UP WITH THE IDEA TO WORK IN PAIRS?

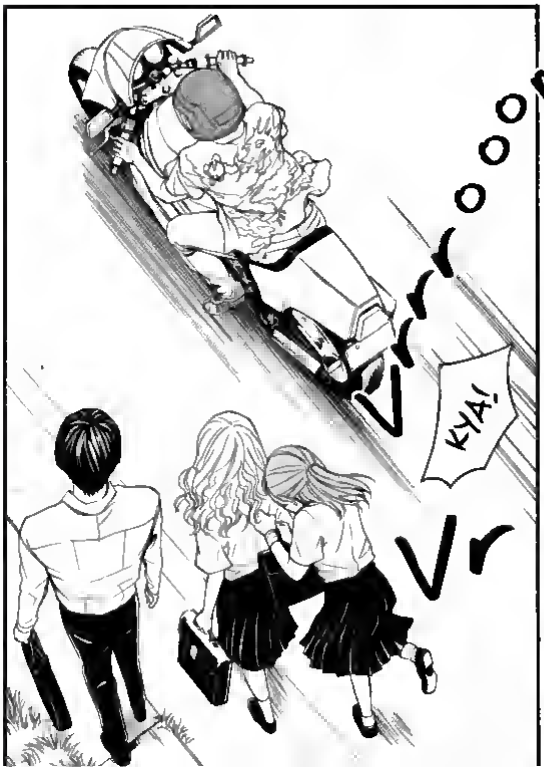
WELL, DO WHATEVER YOU FEEL IS BEST.
THIS IS OFF TOPIC,
BUT YOUR SECONDARY TEACHER IS MS. ASO, RIGHT?
THAT'S RIGHT.
DO YOU TALK TO HER?
I DO. WHAT ABOUT IT?
THAT'S UP WITH THAT?
Your attitude
IS SHE GOING OUT WITH ANY-BODY NOW?
...WELL, IT'S AWKWARD TO ASK
HUH— WHY DON'T YOU JUST ASK HER DIRECTLY?
..I DON'T THINK SO
WHY DO YOU ASK?
WELL, I WAS THINKING OF SETTING HER UP WITH A GUY.
OF COURSE SHE WOULDN'T LET HER PRIVATE LIFE LEAK TO HER STUDENTS ...
OH YEAH, ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED YESTERDAY ...

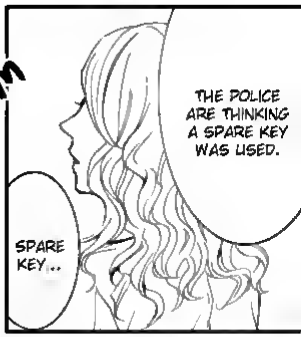
I SEE. BUT I DON'T KNOW MUCH EITHER.
JUST THAT THE POLICE AREN'T CLOSING THE CASE AS A SUICIDE.
HUH...
THEN WHAT ABOUT THE LOCKED ROOM MYSTERY?
YEAH, ABOUT THAT.

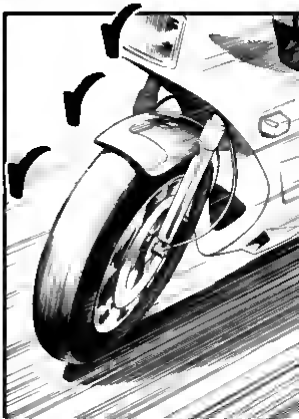
THERE'RE RUMORS THAT IT WASN'T SUICIDE,
SO WHAT'S GOING ON?

DUN

MR. FUJIMURA.
WHERE DID YOU HEAR THAT?


VRRROOOM
KYA!
VRR

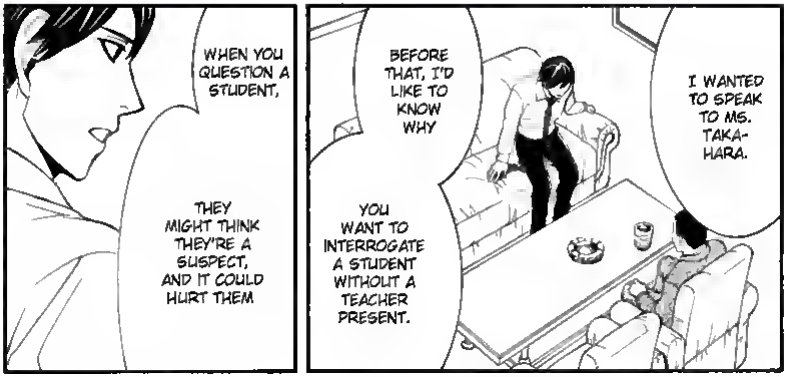

THE POLICE ARE THINKING A SPARE KEY WAS USED.
SPARE KEY..

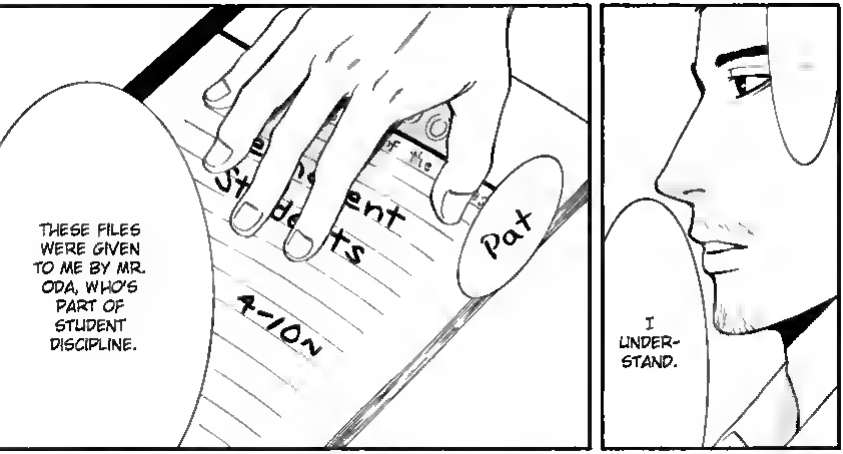


ARE YOU ALRIGHT, EMI?
YES ...
THAT JUST SCARED ME...
Vrrr
Vrm
Vrm
Vrm

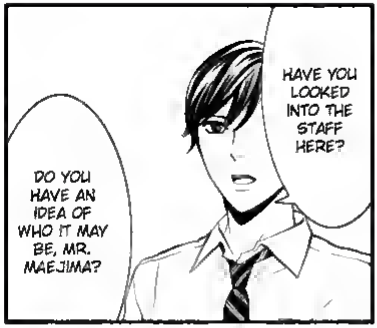
...YOUKO...
vroom
MR MAEJIMA?
GASP
scrape
THAT CAR...

THEY WANT TO QUESTION TAKAHARA?
The next day.
I UNDER-STAND.
I'LL HANDLE THIS.
...
THAT DETECTIVE OHTANI CAME AGAIN..
YES .. THAT'S RIGHT.
click
!
KNOCK KNOCK


WHEN YOU QUESTION A STUDENT,
THEY MIGHT THINK THEY'RE A SUSPECT, AND IT COULD HURT THEM
BEFORE THAT, I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHY
YOU WANT TO INTERROGATE A STUDENT WITHOUT A TEACHER PRESENT.
I WANTED TO SPEAK TO MS. TAKAHARA.

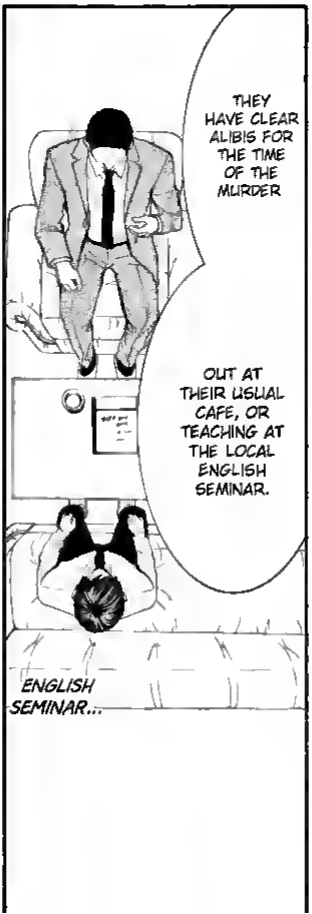

THESE FILES WERE GIVEN TO ME BY MR. ODA, WHO'S PART OF STUDENT DISCIPLINE.
Pat
I UNDERSTAND.

SO IT'S A BLACKLIST OF PEOPLE WITH GRUDGES TOWARD MURAHASHI...
..
THE NAMES OF ALL THE STUDENTS THAT WERE SUSPENDED OR EXPELLED IN THE PAST THREE YEARS ARE LISTED HERE.

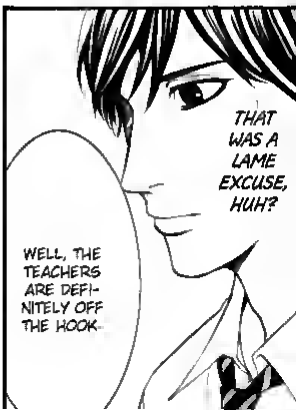

HAVE YOU LOOKED INTO THE STAFF HERE?
DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA OF WHO IT MAY BE, MR. MAEJIMA?

WHAT HAPPENED ABOUT TRYING TO FIND MR. MURAHASHI'S LOVER?
RIGHT NOW, WE CAN'T NAME ANYONE WITH CERTAINTY.
click

THAT'S KYOKO ASO.
SO THAT MEANS SHE HAS AN ALIBI FOR THE TIME OF THE MURDER...


THEY HAVE CLEAR ALIBIS FOR THE TIME OF THE MURDER
OUT AT THEIR USUAL CAFE, OR TEACHING AT THE LOCAL ENGLISH SEMINAR.
ENGLISH SEMINAR...

NO .. NOT AT ALL ..
JUST THAT IT'S COMMON FOR TEACHERS TO MARRY ONE ANOTHER...


THAT WAS A LAME EXCUSE, HUH?
WELL, THE TEACHERS ARE DEFINITELY OFF THE HOOK.

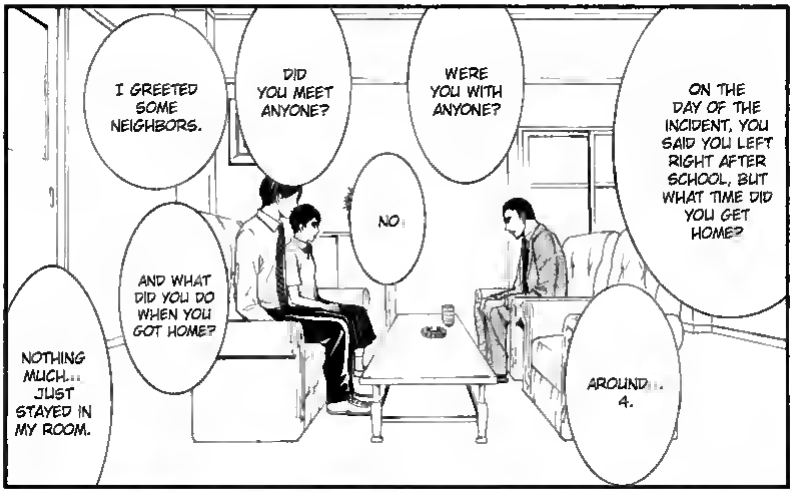
WHEN MS. TAKAHARA WAS CAUGHT SMOKING BY MR. MURAHASHI,
HE PUNISHED HER.
SO IT WASN'T KYOKO ASO?
YES.
A CLEAN CUT.
...PUNISHED...?
HER HAIR ...!
I HEARD SHE WAS MORE UPSET ABOUT THAT THAN THE SUSPENSION,
AND HAD GRUMBLED ABOUT WANTING TO KILL HIM.
MURAHASHI DID IT TO HER...
SHE WASN'T TRYING OUT A NEW STYLE,

SO THE CAR YESTERDAY REALLY WAS...
A REPAIR SHOP...
ONE OF THEM IS THE SON OF A REPAIR SHOP OWNER.
SEEMS THEY MET AT A MOTORCYCLE SHOP.
OH, AND HER FRIENDS.

REPAIR SHOPS HAVE SODIUM CYANIDE.
...WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?

I'M ONLY TELLING YOU THE FACTS.
I WANTED TO TALK TO HER TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT THIS ALL TIES IN WITH THE CASE.
IS THAT ALRIGHT?
...I HAVE TWO CONDI-TIONS.
FIRST, LET ME STAY IN THIS ROOM.
OF COURSE, I WON'T SAY A WORD.
SECOND...
COULD YOU REFRAIN FROM TELLING THE SCHOOL ABOUT HER MOTORCYCLE?
...SO YOUKO DID IT...?

I THOUGHT YOU WERE MORE LAID-BACK, MR. MAEJIMA.
sigh~
squeeze


I GREETED SOME NEIGHBORS.
DID YOU MEET ANYONE?
WERE YOU WITH ANYONE?
ON THE DAY OF THE INCIDENT, YOU SAID YOU LEFT RIGHT AFTER SCHOOL, BUT WHAT TIME DID YOU GET HOME?
NO.
AND WHAT DID YOU DO WHEN YOU GOT HOME?
NOTHING MUCH... JUST STAYED IN MY ROOM.
AROUND 4.

YES

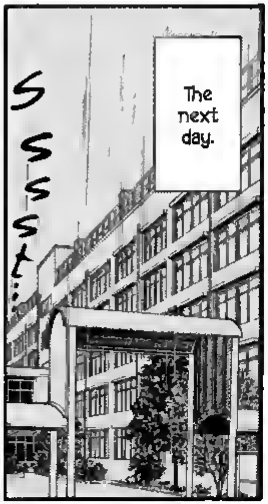
THE WHOLE TIME?

THAT'S A LIE.
!?
YOUR STUDENT HAND-BOOK?
...I HAD MY LICENSE IN THERE, SO I FIGURED IT WOULD BE BAD IF I GOT CAUGHT WITHOUT IT.
SO THIS WAS OHTANI'S TRICK?
...I FORGOT MY STUDENT HANDBOOK IN MY DESK...
I HAVE A WITNESS SAYING YOU WERE AT SCHOOL AROUND 5,
NEAR THE LOCKER ROOMS IN QUESTION.
WAIT A MINUTE... I DIDN'T HEAR ABOUT THIS.

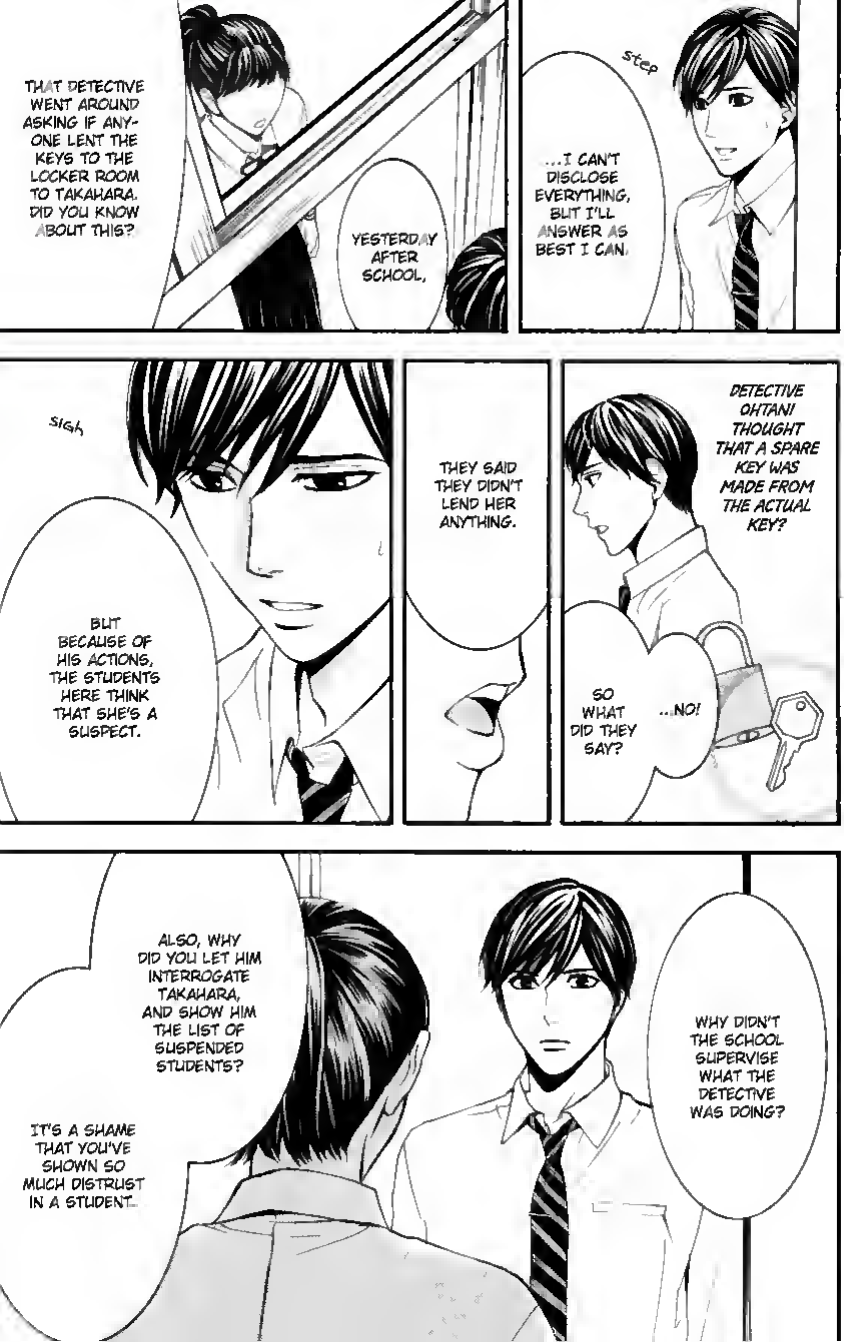
SO THERE'S NO ONE WHO CAN VERIFY HER ALIBI...
...NO.
SO TELL ME WHY YOU WERE NEAR THE LOCKER ROOMS.
I SEE...
CAN ANYONE VERIFY THAT?
I JUST WALKED BY... I WENT HOME RIGHT AFTER.
OH, WAIT.
YOU'VE BEEN A GREAT HELP.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT MR. MURAHASHI'S DEATH?

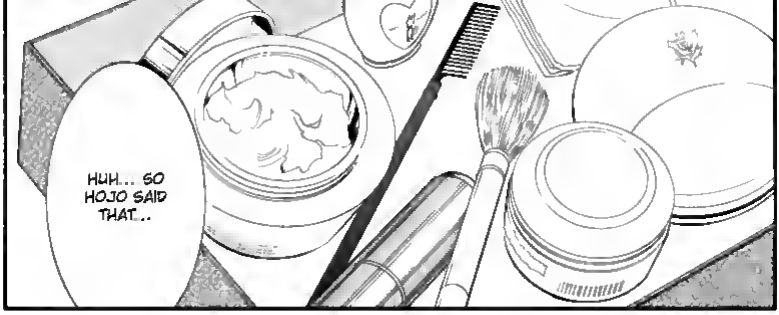
"HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT MR. MURAHASHI'S DEATH?"


The next day.
Ssssst...

MR. MAEJIMA.
IT'S AS IF HE SUSPECTS TAKAHARA ...
AH, HOJO.
WHAT'S WRONG?
I NEED TO SPEAK WITH YOU
I'VE HEARD THAT YOU HAVE THE BEST GRASP ON THE SITUATION, SO I CAME TO SPEAK TO YOU.
THERE ARE A FEW THINGS ABOUT HOW THE CASE IS BEING HANDLED THAT I'M NOT SATISFIED WITH.
ME? ABOUT WHAT ...


THAT DETECTIVE WENT AROUND ASKING IF ANYONE LENT THE KEYS TO THE LOCKER ROOM TO TAKAHARA. DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS?
YESTERDAY AFTER SCHOOL,
step
...I CAN'T DISCLOSE EVERYTHING, BUT I'LL ANSWER AS BEST I CAN.
SIGH
BUT BECAUSE OF HIS ACTIONS, THE STUDENTS HERE THINK THAT SHE'S A SUSPECT.
THEY SAID THEY DIDN'T LEND HER ANYTHING.
DETECTIVE OHTANI THOUGHT THAT A SPARE KEY WAS MADE FROM THE ACTUAL KEY?
SO WHAT DID THEY SAY?
...NO!
ALSO, WHY DID YOU LET HIM INTERROGATE TAKAHARA, AND SHOW HIM THE LIST OF SUSPENDED STUDENTS?
IT'S A SHAME THAT YOU'VE SHOWN SO MUCH DISTRUST IN A STUDENT.
WHY DIDN'T THE SCHOOL SUPERVISE WHAT THE DETECTIVE WAS DOING?

WHATEVER I SAY WILL ONLY SOUND LIKE AN EXCUSE...
...I'VE BEEN
BEST FRIENDS WITH YOUKO SINCE MIDDLE SCHOOL...
I SWEAR I'LL PROVE HER INNO-CENCE!


HUH... SO HOJO SAID THAT...

TADAA! ♪

Good, like that
How's this, Kei?
HEY,
STOP COMPLAINING AND REMEMBER THE STEPS.
AREN'T YOU DONE YET?
YOU'RE GOING TO DO THIS ON YOUR OWN AT THE FESTIVAL!
See?

clatter
clatter
EMI, HAND ME THAT.
BUT YOU'RE NOT JUST AN ANY OLD CLOWN.

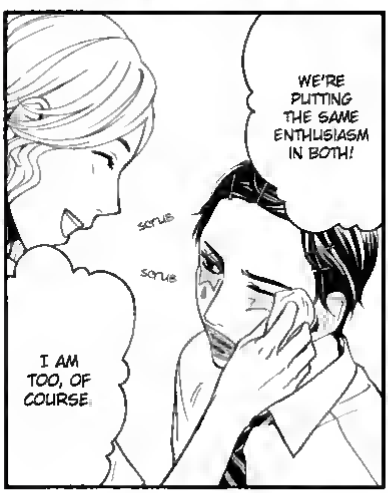
DEFINITELY A CLOWN!
YOU LOOK GOOD LIKE THIS! I CAN'T TELL WHO YOU ARE!
GOOD THING I DON'T LOOK LIKE MYSELF...

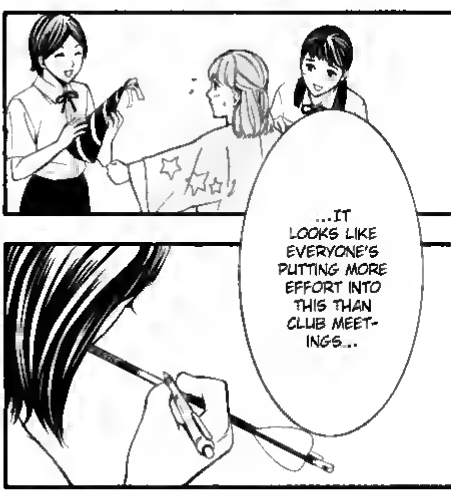
.YOU'VE WASHED THIS OUT, RIGHT?
OF COURSE!
CHUG IT IN ONE GO DURING THE FESTIVAL

OH!
BUT IF YOU WANT, WE'LL GET YOU A REAL ONE.

YEAH, SURE.
AWESOME! ♪
YOU SAID LAST TIME YOU'D GIVE ME AN ARROW, RIGHT?

YOU'RE A DRUNK CLOWN HOLDING A WINE BOTTLE.


WE'RE PUTTING THE SAME ENTHUSIASM IN BOTH!
SCRUB
SCRUB
I AM TOO, OF COURSE.


...IT LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE'S PUTTING MORE EFFORT INTO THIS THAN CLUB MEETINGS...

The next day.
I'VE HEARD YOU'RE GOING TO BE A CLOWN.
YOU KNOW TOO, MR. TAKEI?
EVERYONE IS SAYING THAT.
AND EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT MY ZOMBIE DISGUISE AS WELL.
THOUGH IT WOULD'VE BEEN MORE FUN IF NO ONE KNEW ABOUT MR. FUJIMOTO'S CROSS-DRESSING, OR MS. HORI DISGUISING AS A PLAYBOY BUNNY.
SOMEONE'S DEFINITELY LEAKING THIS
RIGHT...
MS. ASO, THIS WON'T DO, NOW WILL IT!?
YOU FORGOT THE ANSWER SHEETS
I'M SORRY... I'LL GO LOOK FOR THEM RIGHT NOW...

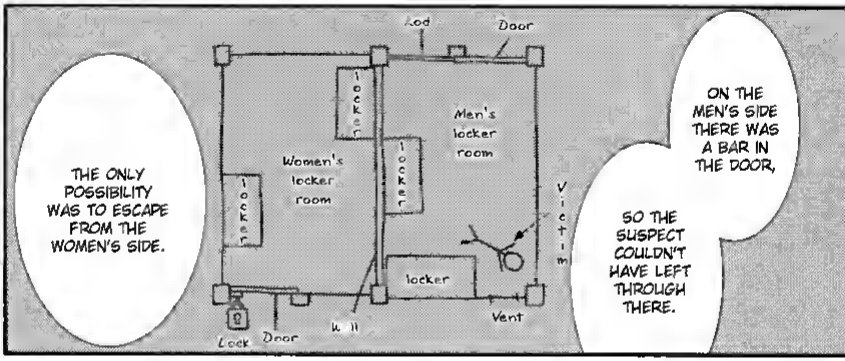
YESTERDAY SHE DIDN'T EVEN ATTEND CLASS ..
I GUESS WHAT HAPPENED WITH MR. MURAHASHI IS REALLY TAKING A TOLL.
I WONDER WHAT'S UP WITH HER?

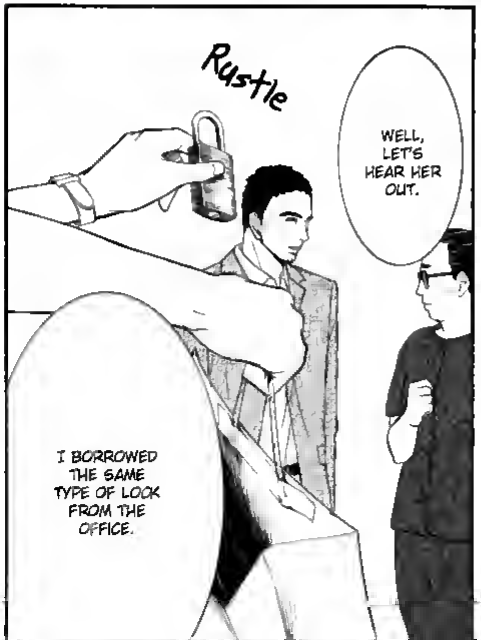
Meeting Room
TAKAHARA IS ON THE WAY NOW.

scratch scratch
WELL, I GUESS YOU COULD SAY THAT ..
Hajs!
DID YOU FIND SOMETHING OUT, MR. OHTANI?

I'M HERE TO FORMALLY PROTEST.
Rustle
Wait!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
PROTEST?
—ARE YOU READY?
I'LL PROVE TAKAHARA'S INNOCENT

AND INSIDE THERE'S A DIVIDE THAT COULD BE CLIMBED.
THERE'S ONE DOOR TO EACH LOCKER ROOM,


Rod
Door
Men's locker room
Women's locker room
locker
locker
locker
locker
Victim
Wall
Vent
Lock
Door
THE ONLY POSSIBILITY WAS TO ESCAPE FROM THE WOMEN'S SIDE.
ON THE MEN'S SIDE THERE WAS A BAR IN THE DOOR,
SO THE SUSPECT COULDN'T HAVE LEFT THROUGH THERE.


Rustle
WELL, LET'S HEAR HER OUT.
I BORROWED THE SAME TYPE OF LOCK FROM THE OFFICE.

SO HOW DID THE SUSPECT REMOVE THE LOCK?

THE LOCK WASN'T LOCKED IN THE FIRST PLACE.
THAT CAN'T BE!
I WAS THE ONE WHO LOCKED IT!

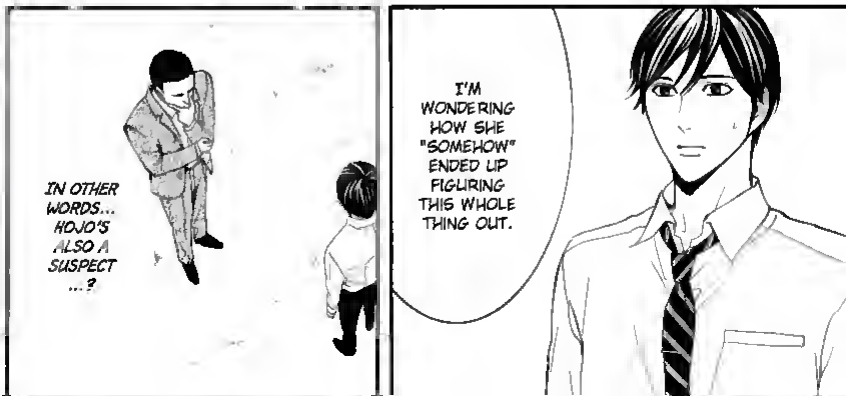
Women's
NOW,
LET'S HANG IT ON THE DOOR LIKE IT WAS BACK THEN BEFORE MS. HORI ARRIVED.
CLICK
CLICK
YOU PUSH DOWN ON IT LIKE THIS.
AND WHEN YOU CLOSE IT,
CLICK
WHEN YOU OPEN IT, YOU USE THE KEY...
I'LL BE THE CULPRIT, HIDING OUT OF SIGHT BEHIND THE LOCKER ROOM.
MS. HORI, PLEASE UNLOCK IT AND ENTER.
MS. HORI ARRIVES WITH THE KEY.
HERE I HAVE ANOTHER OF THE SAME BRAND OF LOCK
RATTLE
CLICK

rattle
pull
I'LL TAKE THE LOCK HANGING ON THE DOOR..
HANG
AND REPLACE IT WITH THE ONE I BOUGHT INSTEAD.
CLICK
I SEE ..
SO THE LOCK WAS REPLACED.
YES .. I WAS SURE THAT SHE DID IT THAT WAY,
SINCE THAT'S THE ONLY WAY THIS LOCKED ROOM MURDER COULD'VE HAPPENED.
THEN THE SUSPECT MUST'VE KNOWN MS. HORI'S HABIT OF LEAVING THE LOCK HANGING, AND TAKEN THAT OPPORTUNITY.

MS. HORI MENTIONED THAT THE LOCKERS IN FRONT OF THE DOORS WERE WET, RIGHT?
YES... SHE DID.
THE SUSPECT NEEDED TO WAIT AROUND RIGHT AFTER SCHOOL FOR MS. MORI,
SO IT HAS TO BE SOMEONE WITH NO ALIBI FOR THAT TIME
TAKAHARA LEFT RIGHT AFTER CLASSES, AND GREETED HER NEIGHBORS BEFORE SHE GOT HOME.
THERE WAS THE POSSIBILITY OF HER NOTICING THE LOCK BEING CHANGED IF SHE WERE USING THOSE LOCKERS ..
THAT FITS IN PERFECTLY WITH YOUR THEORY
YOU UNDERSTAND MY REASONING?
WELL, WELL.
WHAT AN AMAZING SKILL YOU HAVE
MR. MAEJIMA.

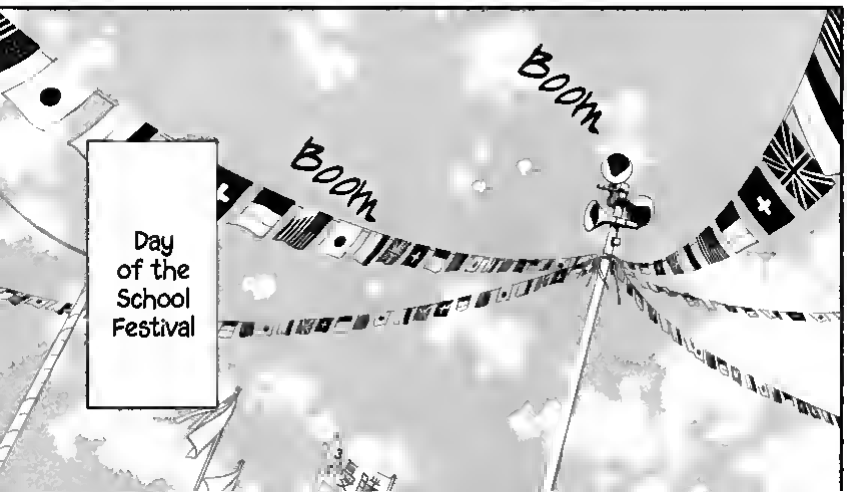
I SEE.. SO HOJO'S THEORY IS RIGHT ON THE MARK.
YES. WE DID OUR OWN BRAINSTORMING AND PRETTY MUCH HAD THE SAME CONCLUSION AS HER.
IT USED TO BE ATTACHED TO THE LOCK KEY
CERTAIN BRANDS PUT SIMILAR CHAINS ON THEIR KEYS SO I LOOKED IT UP AND THEY WERE THE SAME.
YES.. SO WHAT WAS IT?
DO YOU REMEMBER THE PICTURE OF A CHAIN I SHOWED YOU?
I FOUND OUT WHAT IT WAS.

YOU NEED TO SEARCH THROUGH EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY, AND PIECE THEM TOGETHER CORRECTLY.
HOWEVER— BEFORE COMING TO A SINGLE CONCLUSION,


IN OTHER WORDS... HOJO'S ALSO A SUSPECT ...?
I'M WONDERING HOW SHE "SOMEHOW" ENDED UP FIGURING THIS WHOLE THING OUT.

IT'S JUST AN ENDLESS CYCLE—
WELL, SHE HAS AN ALIBI. SHE WAS AT HER KENDO MEET.

POW


Boom
Boom
Day of the School Festival

DO YOUR BEST, MR. MAE-JIMA!

HAHA... I'M JUST THERE TO MAKE MR. FUJIMOTO LOOK GOOD.
BY THE WAY..
NO NO, YOU DID GREAT.
GOOD JOB MR MAEJIMA, THAT WAS EXCELLENT.
GULP
GULP

Archery
WE'LL NOW HAVE A 30 MINUTE LUNCH BREAK.
bustle
bustle
GET ME THAT WHIP!
I TOLD YOU TO SEW IT UP BETTER!
stomp
stomp
OH NO, THE OUTFIT'S RIPPED!
IT'S ALMOST SHOW-TIME, CRAP!
crowd
crowd
crowd
HURRY —!
NOT BAD, HUH?
YOU LEFT EARLY, SO WE ASKED MR. TAKE! FOR HELP.
WHAT'S THIS BOX FOR?
IT SEEMS TOO BIG TO BE A TRICK BOX ..
DON'T TELL ME I HAVE TO GET IN HERE..
RIGHT
SMILE
GOOD LUCK, CLOWN.

AND NOW, THE CLUB COMPETI-TIONS—
IT'S THE COSTUME PARADE.
THIS IS OUR FIRST TIME EVER DOING A COSTUME PARADE,
AND EVERY CLUB'S WORKED HARD FOR THIS EVENT.
THE COACHES ARE ALSO DOING THEIR BEST!
Whoa~
Hahaha
NEXT UP—
STEP

A CIRCUS, PRESENTED BY THE ARCHERY CLUB.
WHEN THE RINGLEADER RECITES THE MAGIC WORDS—
ONE
TWO—...
THREE!
BAM
OH! A CLOWN CAME OUT OF THE BOX!!

Gulp
Gulp
HE'S CHUGGING THE WHOLE THING DOWN!
HE'S TOTALLY DRUNK!!
Ha
ha
ha
ha
HE'S SWERVING AROUND HOLDING A BOTTLE OF WINE...
HE'S CROUCH-ING OVER NOW.
—OH?
ALRIGHT,
THAT WAS GREAT.
YOU CAN GET UP.
twitch
Ha
ha
ha
ha
ha
GUESS HE DRANK TOO MUCH.
thud
kick
twitch
twitch
twitch

AAAAAAAA
AH...
AH...
MR. MAEJIMA!
HANG IN THERE!

NO.
NOT ME...
THAT'S...

MR. TAKEI.
THAT'S...

SOMEONE IS TRYING
TO KILL ME.

HOUKAGO

CHAPTER 1

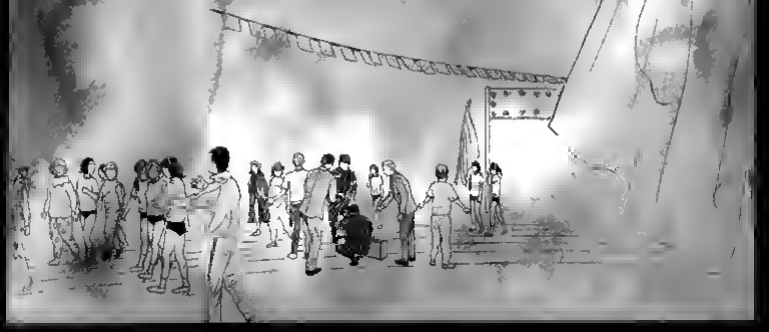
BY SHIMOTSUKI KAYOKO
& HIGASHINO KEIGO

THE END

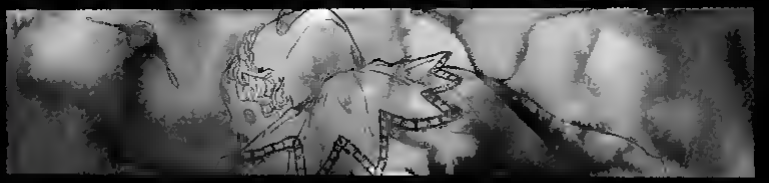
SCANNER KUINNI
TRANSLATOR DELILARYN
CLEANS MELONA + MITSUGI
EDITORS ENIGMA + ROGUE11
QC ISHITORI

THE-END-MANGA.LIVEJOURNAL.COM

ALWAYS OPEN TO NEW FREELANCERS
FINISHING OFF PROJECTS OF THEIR CHOOSING!

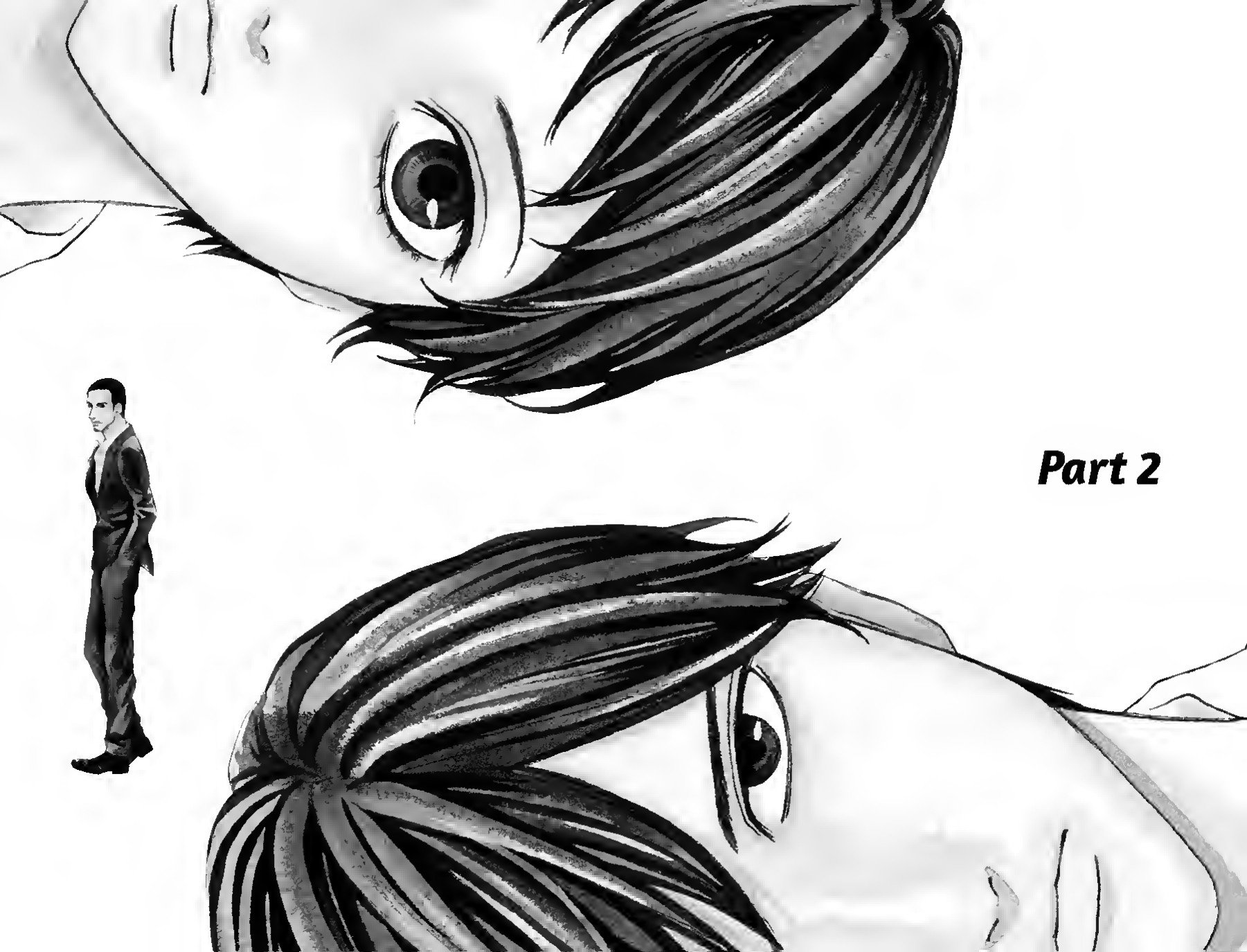


SOMEONE WAS KILLED RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES.



IT WAS MR. TAKEI, DRESSED AS A CLOWN...

THOUGH IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ME DRESSED UP LIKE THE CLOWN...



Part 2

放課後

HOUKAGO

ARE YOU LISTENING?
MR. MAEJIMA.
CLACK
AND YOU WERE WITH THE TRACK TEAM.
SO THE ARCHERY CLUB WAS WITH THE TRACK TEAM COACH,
YES..
THEN MR. TAKEI WAS KILLED
BEFORE WE HEADED OFF TO GET DRESSED, MR. TAKEI MADE A SUGGESTION.
COULD YOU EXPLAIN THIS SITUATION?
YES...

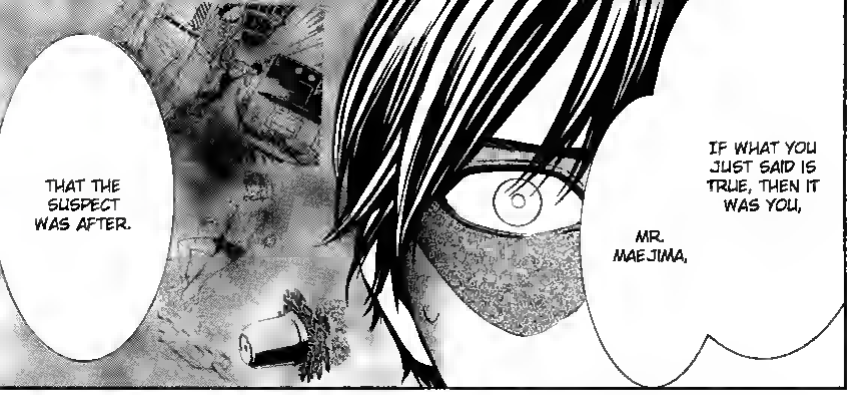
ALL THE STUDENTS THINK THE CLOWN'S GOING TO BE YOU, MR. MAEJIMA
BUT IF WE SWITCHED PLACES, EVERYONE WILL BE IN FOR A SURPRISE.
...I GUESS.

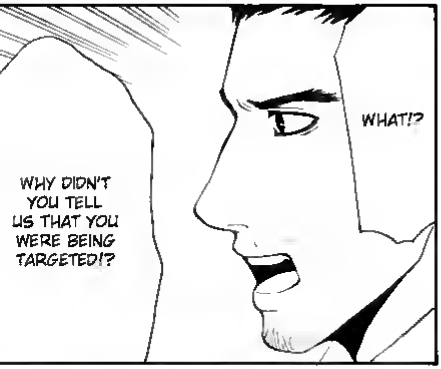
ISN'T IT LAME, US JUST GETTING HUMILIATED?

MIGHT AS WELL GIVE THE STUDENTS A SURPRISE.

SO. NO ONE ELSE KNEW OF THE SWITCH EXCEPT YOU, MR MAEJIMA?
YES..
I DID HIS MAKEUP AS WELL.
IT WAS EASY TO SWITCH PLACES WITH HIM, SINCE I ONLY HAD TO WAIT INSIDE THAT BOX...

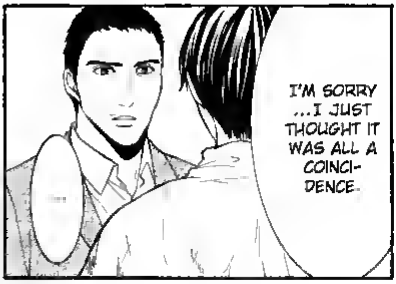
GULP
THIS IS CRUCIAL, MR. MAEJIMA.


IF WHAT YOU JUST SAID IS TRUE, THEN IT WAS YOU,
MR. MAEJIMA,
THAT THE SUSPECT WAS AFTER.


WHAT!?
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL US THAT YOU WERE BEING TARGETED!?

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON.. HONESTLY.
ACTUALLY—

NOW I'M CERTAIN THAT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE THE TARGET.
TELL ME EVERYTHING FROM THE BEGINNING.

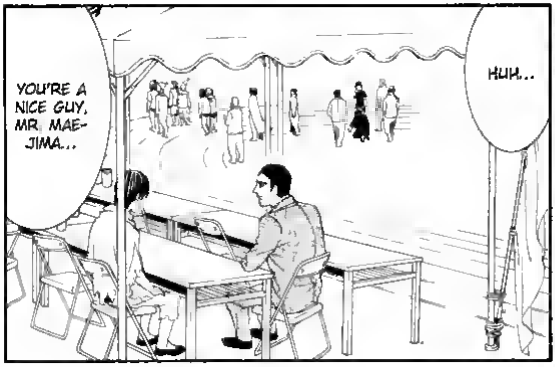

I'M SORRY ...I JUST THOUGHT IT WAS ALL A COINCIDENCE.

WELL, NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT THAT NOW.

SO THE COSTUME PARADE, IS THAT AN ANNUAL EVENT?
IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THIS YEAR. EACH CLUB'S CAPTAIN AGREED ON IT DURING A MEETING.
I SEE, AND WHEN WAS THIS DECIDED?
I'M NOT SURE EXACTLY, BUT AROUND A WEEK AGO.
AND THAT WAS WHEN IT WAS DECIDED YOU'D DRESS AS THE CLOWN?
YES.
THE DETAILS OF THE PARADE WERE KNOWN ONLY TO THE CLUB MEMBERS, RIGHT?
PAR-TIALLY ...
...BUT IT LEAKED THAT I WAS GOING TO DRESS AS A CLOWN.
PROBABLY BECAUSE FRIENDS IN DIFFERENT CLUBS TALK ABOUT IT.
AND NOT ONLY THAT, THEY KNEW WHAT OTHER TEACHERS WERE GOING TO DRESS AS, TOO.
AND THAT'S WHAT CAUSED THIS MIS-FORTUNE.

THE SUSPECT KNEW I WAS GOING TO BE THE CLOWN, AND PUT POISON IN THAT BOTTLE...
! .. THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE...
SO I HAVE THE GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE SITUATION. SEEMS LIKE ANYONE COULD'VE THOUGHT OF THIS.
WHICH COMES DOWN TO WHO COULD'VE PUT IN THE POISON
I REMEMBER SOMETHING ABOUT THE BOTTLE!
DURING THE FESTIVAL, THE BOTTLE WAS LEFT BEHIND THE CAMPUS .. WHERE THE BOX WAS AT
BUT THE LABEL ON IT WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE I SAW NEXT TO MR. TAKEI
...WHICH MIGHT MEAN THAT THE SUSPECT SWITCHED THE REAL BOTTLE WITH THE POISONED ONE.
...SO THE SUSPECT SWITCHED THE BOTTLE ITSELF...
SO CONSIDERING THE TIME FRAME, THE SWITCH MUST'VE HAPPENED BEHIND THE CAMPUS.

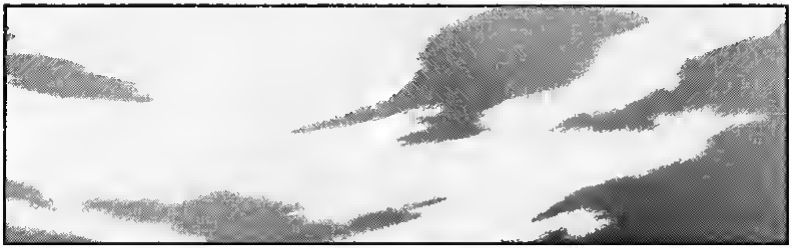
LIKE SOMEONE HOLDING A GRUDGE AGAINST YOU...
IS THERE REALLY NOTHING YOU CAN THINK OF?
ABOUT A MOTIVE...


YOU'RE A NICE GUY, MR. MAE-JIMA...
HUH...

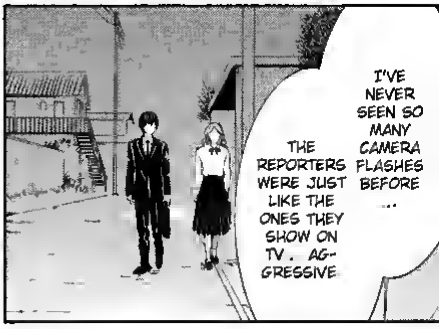
...I'VE TRIED MY BEST NOT TO,
BUT I MIGHT'VE HURT SOMEONE WITHOUT KNOWING IT.

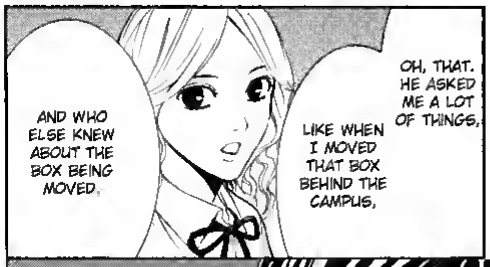
—THAT'S RIGHT...

...WHAT ABOUT HER? DOESN'T SHE ALREADY HAVE AN ALIBI?
YOU WERE THE HOMEROOM TEACHER FOR MS. TAKAHARA LAST YEAR, RIGHT?
THAT'S ONLY IF MS HOJO'S ANALYSIS WAS CORRECT.
THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT SHE'S STILL IN A TIGHT SPOT.
BUT MIGHT BENEFIT FROM YOUR DEATH?
THAT'S FINE.
SO, IS THERE ANYONE THAT DOESN'T NECESSARILY HOLD A GRUDGE AGAINST YOU,
...SHE WAS A STUDENT OF MINE. NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS.
OR MAYBE SOMEONE WHO WOULD BE WORSE OFF IF YOU SURVIVE...?



STUFF LIKE THAT CAN EVEN HAPPEN AT SCHOOLS.
YEAH.. JUST LIKE ON TV...


I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MANY CAMERA FLASHES BEFORE ...
THE REPORTERS WERE JUST LIKE THE ONES THEY SHOW ON TV. AGGRESSIVE


AND WHO ELSE KNEW ABOUT THE BOX BEING MOVED.
LIKE WHEN I MOVED THAT BOX BEHIND THE CAMPUS,
OH, THAT. HE ASKED ME A LOT OF THINGS,

...IT SEEMS LIKE YOU WERE TALKING TO THE DETECTIVE FOR A LONG TIME.

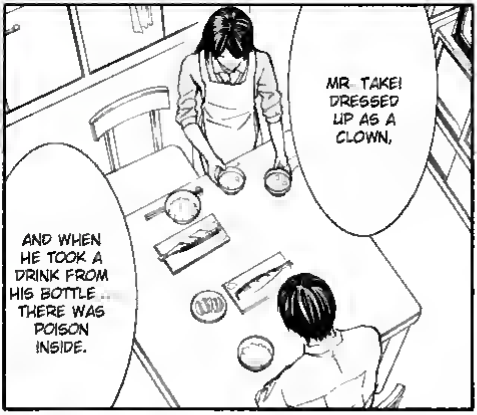
SO I GUESS THEY C.N'T N.RROW DOWN THE NUMBER OF SUSPECTS..
OF COURSE EVERYBODY IN THE CLUB KNEW, BUT SOMEONE MIGHT'VE SPOTTED US...

IF SHE MARRIES THE SON OF THE PRINCIPAL, IT'LL BE A CINDERELLA STORY.
BUT SINCE YOU KNEW ABOUT HER PAST RELATIONSHIPS, YOU'RE IN HER WAY.
SO MS. ASO HAS A MOTIVE.
—I SEE.
MR. TAKEI'S CAUSE OF DEATH IS THE SAME AS MR. MURAHASHI'S. CYANIDE POISONING.
IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT THESE TWO INCIDENTS WERE CAUSED BY THE SAME SUSPECT.
DO YOU SUPPOSE THE PERPETRATOR OF THESE TWO CRIMES IS THE SAME ...?
WHEN MURAHASHI WAS KILLED, KYOKO ASO HAD A SOLID ALIBI...
6
Maejima
DING DO-NG
IF YOU POSIT THAT MS. ASO AND MR. MURAHASHI WERE IN A RELATIONSHIP,
THEN THE TWO MOTIVES WOULD MATCH UP.
HOWEVER ..

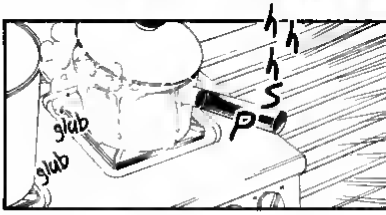
PATTER...
IS SHE OUT?
... HUH?
IF THE SUSPECT ISN'T ASO OR YOUKO, THEN WHY WERE MURA-HASHI AND I TARGETED ...?
Jisp
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
AH..
I'M BACK.
NEW CLOTHES ...
WELCOME HOME.

DID YOU HAVE WORK TODAY?
NO, I HAD THE DAY OFF.
THAT WAS FAST, I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING OUT TO DRINK WITH THE OTHERS.
RIGHT, SHE GOT A PART-TIME JOB AT A CONVENIENCE STORE.
MAYBE SHE BOUGHT THEM WITH HER SPENDING MONEY...
HUH?
THE RECEIVER ISN'T IN PLACE.
WERE YOU ON THE PHONE WITH SOMEONE, YUMIKO?
flare
clatter
click
I WAS CALLING MY MOTHER DURING LUNCH.
YOU NOTICE THE SMALLEST THINGS.

TODAY WE HAD TO DRESS UP DURING THE FESTIVAL.
thunk thunk
YOU MENTIONED THAT.
MR. TAKEI WAS KILLED.


MR. TAKEI DRESSED UP AS A CLOWN,
AND WHEN HE TOOK A DRINK FROM HIS BOTTLE... THERE WAS POISON INSIDE.

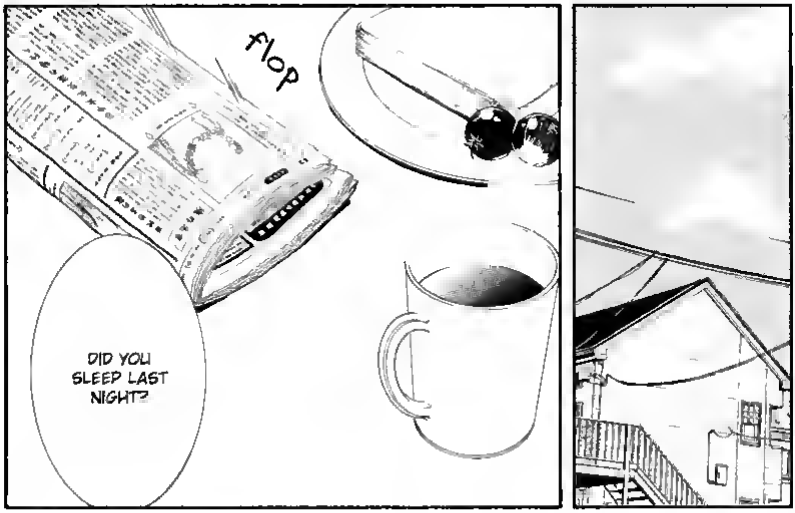
WHAT?


h-h
hs
P-
glub
glub

...I'M NEXT.

clatter
WHO WOULD DO SUCH A THING...

I WAS ACTUALLY SUPPOSED TO BE THE CLOWN,
SO I WAS THE TARGET. THE PERPETRATOR WILL DEFINITELY TRY AGAIN.
WHAT DO YOU...?
...OH NO...


FLOP
DID YOU SLEEP LAST NIGHT?

RING

Clown Poisoned!?

WELL, A LITTLE...
TODAY'S A DAY OFF, SO I'LL RELAX A BIT.

IT'S FROM THE VICE PRINCIPAL.

YES, MAEJIMA RESIDENCE...
RING
Click

AND HE SAID THAT HE SAW A WINE BOTTLE DURING THE FESTIVAL!

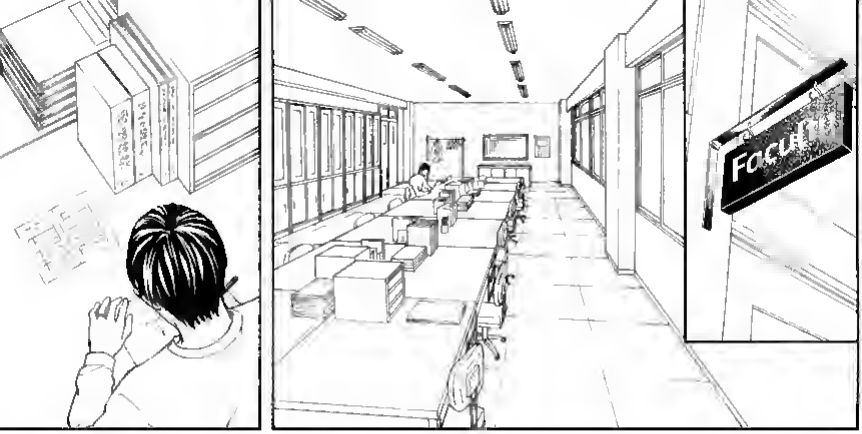
I JUST GOT A PHONE CALL FROM MR. HONMA FROM THE PTA,
GOOD MORNING, MR. MAEJIMA!
GOOD MORNING. IS SOMETHING WRONG?

HE CAN'T SAY FOR SURE, BUT IT'S VERY SIMILAR TO THE ONE THAT WAS POISONED.
AND WHERE DID HE FIND IT?
IN THE STOR-AGE ROOM.
THEY WENT IN THERE TO LOOK FOR A MOP FOR THE TREASURE HUNT AND THEY SAW A BOTTLE THERE.
THAT MIGHT BE VERY IMPORTANT!
I'LL CONTACT MR. OHTAN! NOW AND HEAD OVER!
YES, THANK YOU!
thunk
thunk
YOU'RE GOING TO SCHOOL ..? SHOULDN'T YOU STAY HOME?
Riiing
Riiing
I'LL BE BACK BEFORE NIGHT-FALL.

DOESN'T SEEM LIKE IT'S FOR ME.
...AH,
...YES.
clack
MAEJIMA RESIDENCE
clack
clack
crowd
crowd
IT SEEMED LIKE YUMIKO SUDDENLY LOWERED HER VOICE...
IS IT JUST ME?
.....

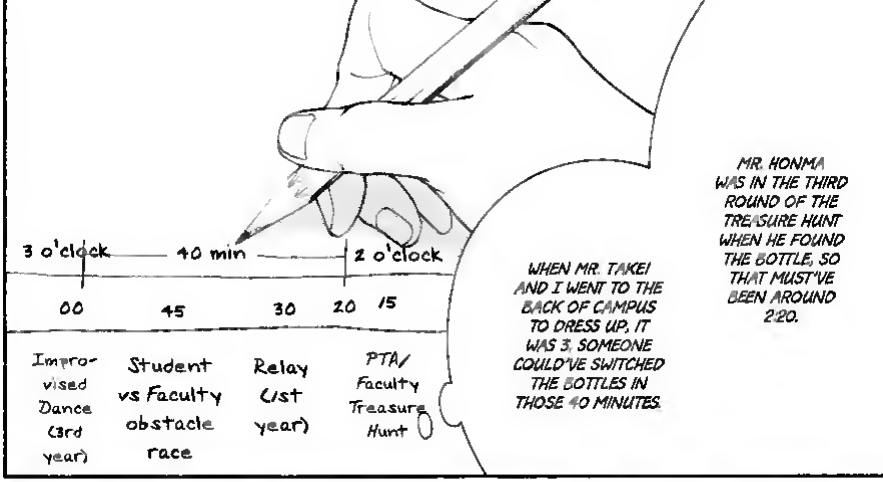
AND THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME KNOW.
WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO GATHER QUITE A BIT OF EVIDENCE.
THANK YOU FOR COMING.
HEY,
MR. MAEJIMA.
ACCORDING TO THE PROGRAM,
THE TREASURE HUNT WAS HELD AT 2.15. IS THAT ACCURATE?
I JUST TALKED TO MR. HONMA, AND HE SAID THE BOTTLE WAS IN A PAPER BAG.
HE WAS CURIOUS AS TO WHY IT LOOKED SO NEW, SO HE LOOKED INSIDE.
I SEE. THE SUSPECT MIGHT'VE USED THAT AS WELL.
...I THINK IT'S GENERALLY NOT LOCKED.
WHAT ABOUT THE LOCK TO THE STORAGE ROOM?
YES... IT WAS FAIRLY ON SCHEDULE.
SO THE SWITCH MUST'VE OCCURRED AFTER 2:15.

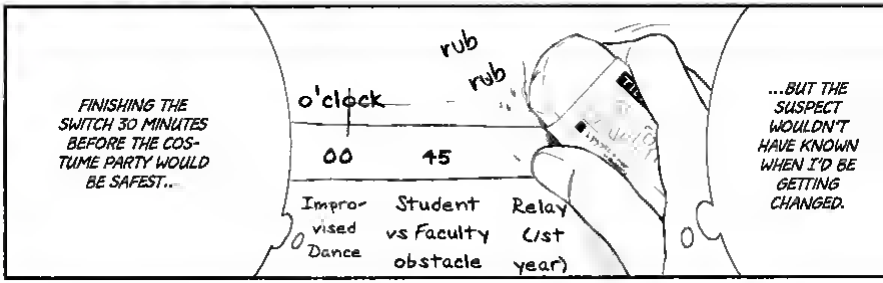
ANY FINGER-PRINTS?
MR. OHTANI.
THE SUSPECT WOULDN'T MAKE A MISTAKE LIKE THAT.
OF COURSE. OF YOU AND YOUR ARCHERY CLUB MEMBERS.
OH, AND THE REAL WINE BOTTLE WAS FOUND A FEW METERS AWAY FROM WHERE THE BOX WAS PLACED.
THE SUSPECT MUST'VE FIGURED IT WOULD BE SUSPICIOUS TO WALK AROUND WITH IT.
EITHER WAY, I'LL TRY TO CLEAR THIS UP SOON,
BEFORE THERE'S A THIRD VICTIM.
A THIRD VICTIM... HUH.

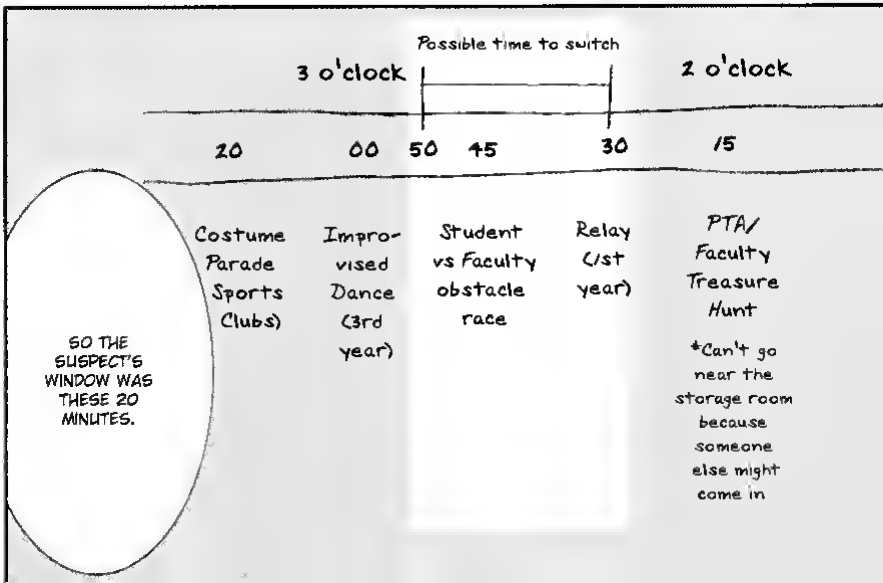


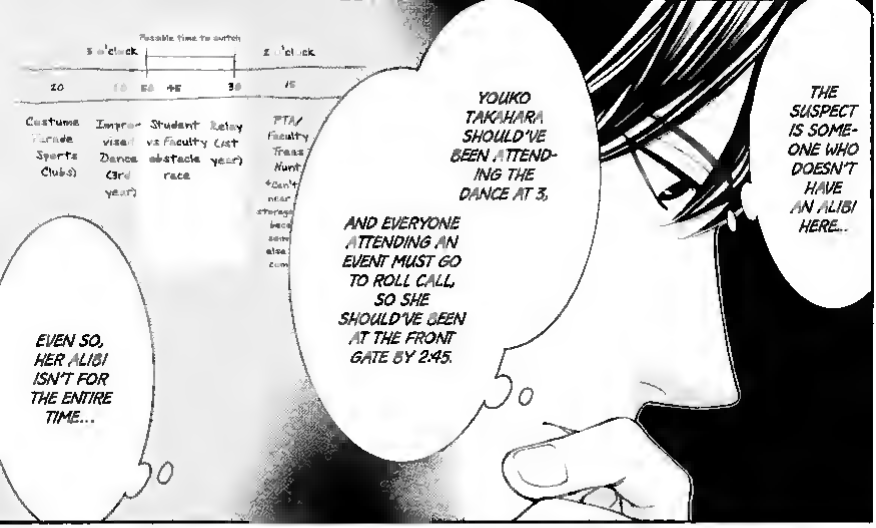
3 o'clock				2 o'clock
20	00	45	30	15
Costume Parade (Sports Clubs)	Improvised Dance (3rd year)	Student vs Faculty obstacle race	Relay (1st year)	PTA/ Faculty Treasure Hunt

BUT THE SUSPECT MUST'VE SECURED 15 MINUTES AS A CUSHION.
THE TIME REQUIRED TO MAKE THE SWITCH...
IS 2 MINUTES TO GET TO THE STORAGE ROOM, 2 MINUTES FROM THE STORAGE ROOM TO BEHIND THE CAMPUS, AND 3 MINUTES TO SWITCH AND HIDE THE REAL WINE BOTTLE... A TOTAL OF 7 MINUTES


3 o'clock
40 min
2 o'clock
00
45
30
20
15
Improvised Dance (3rd year)
Student vs Faculty obstacle race
Relay (1st year)
PTA/ Faculty Treasure Hunt
WHEN MR. TAKEI AND I WENT TO THE BACK OF CAMPUS TO DRESS UP, IT WAS 3. SOMEONE COULD'VE SWITCHED THE BOTTLES IN THOSE 40 MINUTES.
MR. HONMA WAS IN THE THIRD ROUND OF THE TREASURE HUNT WHEN HE FOUND THE BOTTLE, SO THAT MUST'VE BEEN AROUND 2:20.


FINISHING THE SWITCH 30 MINUTES BEFORE THE COSTUME PARTY WOULD BE SAFEST..
rub
rub
o'clock
00
45
Improvised Dance
Student vs Faculty obstacle
Relay (1st year)
...BUT THE SUSPECT WOULDN'T HAVE KNOWN WHEN I'D BE GETTING CHANGED.


Possible time to switch
3 o'clock
2 o'clock
20
00
50
45
30
15
SO THE SUSPECT'S WINDOW WAS THESE 20 MINUTES.
Costume Parade Sports Clubs)
Improvised Dance (3rd year)
Student vs Faculty obstacle race
Relay (1st year)
PTA/ Faculty Treasure Hunt
*Can't go near the storage room because someone else might come in


Possible time to switch
3 o'clock
2 o'clock
20
50
45
30
15
Costume Parade (Sports Clubs)
Impromptu visual Dance (3rd year)
Student vs Faculty obstacle race
Relay (1st year)
PTA/ Faculty Brass Band
THE SUSPECT IS SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T HAVE AN ALIBI HERE...
YOUKO TAKAHARA SHOULD'VE BEEN ATTENDING THE DANCE AT 3,
AND EVERYONE ATTENDING AN EVENT MUST GO TO ROLL CALL, SO SHE SHOULD'VE BEEN AT THE FRONT GATE BY 2:45.
EVEN SO, HER ALIBI ISN'T FOR THE ENTIRE TIME...

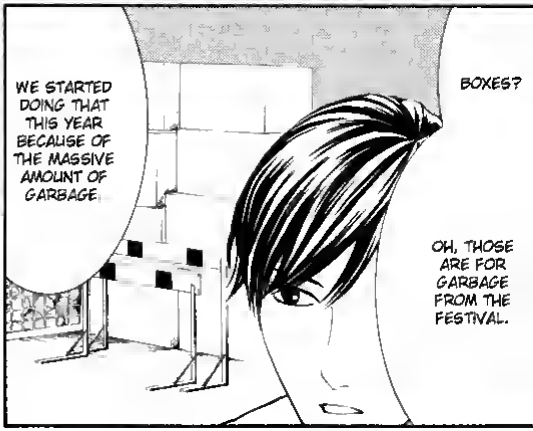
MR. MAEJIMA.
rattle
HAA...

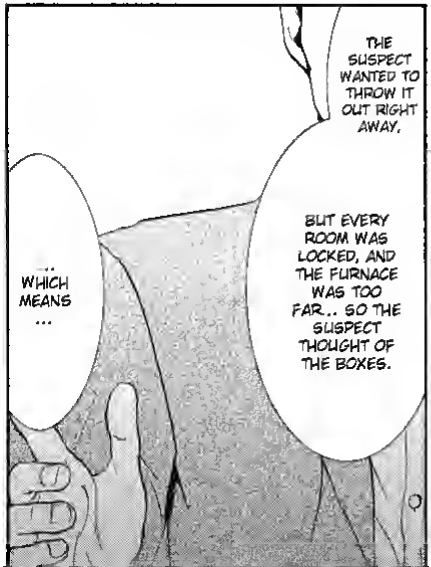
RUSTLE
THIS WAS FOUND IN THE AUDITORIUM STORAGE ROOM,
ON THE WEST SIDE OF CAMPUS
RUSTLE
THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

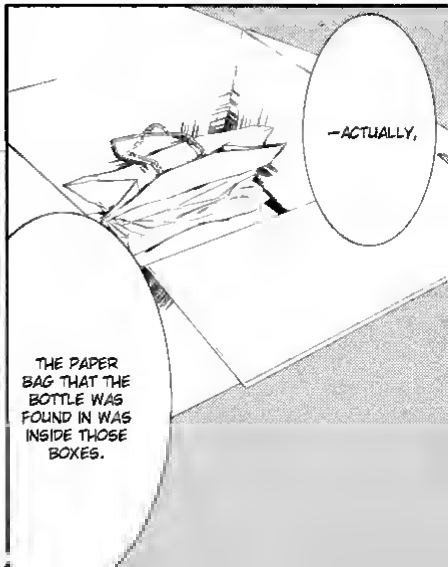
THERE WERE CARDBOARD BOXES STACKED UP IN THAT STORAGE ROOM. WHAT ARE THEY FOR?
I SEE ...
AH, BY THE WAY,

...NO, I DON'T.
DO YOU RECALL SEEING IT?
THE BOTTLE WAS INSIDE THIS BAG.

DO THE STUDENTS KNOW ABOUT THOSE BOXES?
NO, THE STUDENTS WOULD JUST CREATE MORE TRASH IF THEY DID..


WE STARTED DOING THAT THIS YEAR BECAUSE OF THE MASSIVE AMOUNT OF GARBAGE.
BOXES?
OH, THOSE ARE FOR GARBAGE FROM THE FESTIVAL.


THE SUSPECT WANTED TO THROW IT OUT RIGHT AWAY,
BUT EVERY ROOM WAS LOCKED, AND THE FURNACE WAS TOO FAR.. SO THE SUSPECT THOUGHT OF THE BOXES.
... WHICH MEANS ...

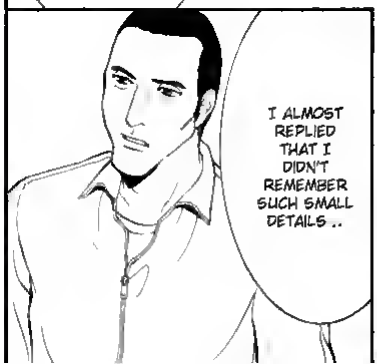

—ACTUALLY,
THE PAPER BAG THAT THE BOTTLE WAS FOUND IN WAS INSIDE THOSE BOXES.

IT WAS .. A TEACHER?
?
DO YOU HAVE YESTERDAY'S PROGRAM ON YOU?
WELL, IT'S NO GOOD TO RUSH INTO A THEORY.
ACCORDING TO MY THEORY, ANYONE WITHOUT AN ALIBI WITHIN THE 50-MINUTE PERIOD FROM 2:30 IS SUSPICIOUS.
WHICH MEANS SHE SHOULD'VE BEEN IN LINE AT THE FRONT GATE BEFORE THAT.
14:30
14:45
15:00
Relay (1st years)
PTA/Faculty Tre
Hunt
MS. ASO WAS IN AN EVENT AT 2:45,

The next day
MS. ASO WAS TALKING TO THE DETECTIVE JUST NOW.

SO YOU MEAN THAT RIGHT NOW, WE CAN'T PRESUME
THAT MS. ASO'S THE SUSPECT...

WHAT...
THE DETECTIVE SUDDENLY INTERROGATED ME YESTERDAY,
ASKING IF I WAS WITH MS. ASO DURING THE OBSTACLE RACE.


I ALMOST REPLIED THAT I DIDN'T REMEMBER SUCH SMALL DETAILS ..

I SAID I WAS,
AND THEN HE ASKED IF SHE WAS AT THE FRONT GATE.

KYOKO ASO'S ALIBI IS INVALID...

Please let Police Station 5 know if you have any information about this bag
TO KILL A CLOWN DURING THE MIDDLE OF A FESTIVAL, WITH EVERYONE LOOKING ON ...
HOWEVER—
WOULD SHE HAVE PICKED SUCH A DISTASTEFUL, COMPLICATED METHOD...?

RUSH!
MS. ASO!
HA4
WHAT DO YOU WANT?

DID YOU KILL HIM?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SPILLED EVERYTHING TO THE DETECTIVE, RIGHT?
I JUST TOLD HIM THE TRUTH ABOUT ME BEING IN YOUR WAY.
THEN EVEN IF I TOLD YOU RIGHT NOW I DIDN'T DO IT, WOULD YOU BELIEVE ME?

IT'S A SHAME THAT I CAN'T EVEN PROVE MY INNO-CENCE...
I CAN ONLY SIT AND WAIT ...
...
THERE'S NO WAY YOU WOULD. EVEN THE DETECTIVES WERE LIKE THAT...

BUT..
JUST ONE WORD
AS A WARNING TO YOU ALL.
I DON'T WANT TO SAY ANYTHING, BECAUSE EVERYTHING WILL BE USED AGAINST ME

EVEN IF YOU BACK ME INTO A CORNER, THAT WON'T END IT.
BECAUSE THE TRUTH LIES SOME-WHERE ELSE...
STEP
STEP
I HEARD ABOUT ASO'S INTER-VIEW FROM THE OFFI-CERS.
SHE MIGHT H, VE SOMETHING TO DO WITH T, KEI'S CASE, BUT SHE HAS A SET ALIBI FOR MURAHASHI'S MURDER...
SO IF IT'S NOT YOUKO OR ASO, THEN WHO IS IT—?

VROOOOOM
WHA...

Gulh
HA
HA
THAT CAR...
screech
HAA
GRIT
HAA
BAM
IT'S AFTER ME.
THIS IS BAD!

vroooom
HAA
stagger
!!
CRASH
VROOM
I WON'T MAKE IT—

Screech
Scrape
Scrape

ARE YOU OK!?
VROOM
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
VROOM

PLEASE! GO AFTER THAT CAR!
GOT IT!
VROOOM
WE CAN MAKE IT!
THE LICENSE PLATE...
IT'S HIDDEN BY SOME-THING!
THE LIGHT'S TURNING RED!
FLASH

SHIT!!
VRM
IT GOT AWAY...
THE HIGHWAY'S AHEAD.
THERE'S NO POINT IN GOING AFTER IT.
Oh!
WE CAN'T GET YOU PAST THE TOLL-BOOTH LIKE THAT.

THE CAR WAS A SELENE WX.
THAT'S A GOOD CLUE.
YEAH, BUT...
HEY YOUKO ..
LET'S TAKE A BREAK.
THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME OUT THERE.
IF YOU CAME LATER, WHO KNOWS WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED?

YOU ALWAYS TALK IN A ROUND-ABOUT WAY.
THAT'S RIGHT... THOUGH I COULD HARDLY SAY ANYTHING IF YOU TOLD ME THAT'S YOUR USUAL ROUTE.
WHY I WAS THERE, RIGHT?
THERE'S ONE THING I WANT TO ASK YOU.

I WANTED TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.

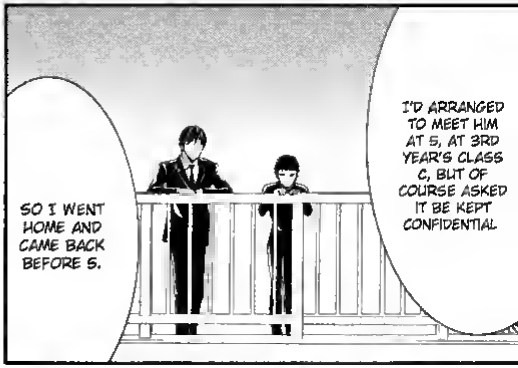
SOMEONE SAW ME NEAR THE LOCKERS THE DAY MURAHASHI WAS KILLED, RIGHT?
WHEN THE DETECTIVE ASKED ME ABOUT IT, I SAID I WAS JUST PASS-ING BY.
YES.
SO... WHAT DID YOU WANT TO TELL ME?
I WAS WAITING AT THE STATION...BUT I COULDN'T GET IT OUT OF MY MIND
I DECIDED TO TELL YOU TODAY, SO I CAME BACK RIGHT WHEN ALL THAT HAPPENED.

BACK THEN
I WAS ACTUALLY FOLLOWING MURAHASHI.
BUT THAT'S NOT TRUE.
FOLLOW-ING HIM? WHY...
scratch scratch
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SAY THIS ..
BUT BACK THEN I WAS SO ANGRY AT MURA-HASHI.
HE DIDN'T KNOW HOW PAINFUL IT WAS FOR HIM TO CUT MY HAIR LIKE THAT.
THAT'S WHEN I PLOTTED REVENGE AGAINST HIM...
AND I THOUGHT ABOUT ACCUSING HIM OF RAPE

SO THAT ANSWER SHE GAVE TO OHTANI—
...I HAD MY LICENSE IN THERE, SO I FIGURED IT WOULD BE BAD IF I GOT CAUGHT WITHOUT IT.
IT WAS PART OF HER SCRIPT...
WASN'T A BLATANT LIE.

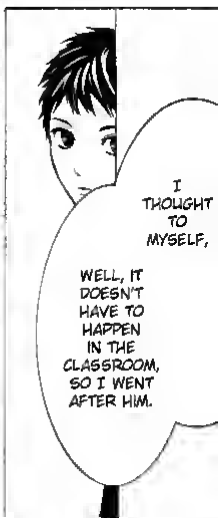
THAT DAY AFTER SCHOOL I WAS GOING TO RETURN TO SCHOOL TO GET MY STUDENT HANDBOOK,
ND SCREAM ABOUT HIM ATTACKING ME WHILE I WAS IN THE CLASSROOM.

THAT'S WHEN I SAW MURAHASHI GOING TO THE REAR CAMPUS SECRETIVELY.


SO I WENT HOME AND CAME BACK BEFORE 5.
I'D ARRANGED TO MEET HIM AT 5, AT 3RD YEAR'S CLASS C, BUT OF COURSE ASKED IT BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL

THAT CONDOM HAS NO FINGERPRINTS ON IT...
.....

SINCE I'D SNUCK A CONDOM INSIDE HIS POCKET EARLIER,
HE COULDN'T RUN AWAY AFTER I STARTED SCREAMING.


I THOUGHT TO MYSELF,
WELL, IT DOESN'T HAVE TO HAPPEN IN THE CLASSROOM, SO I WENT AFTER HIM.

IT'S NOT LIKE I COULD LOOK THROUGH THE VENT, SO I LISTENED UNDER IT.
THEN ...
SO YOUKO WAS THE ONE WHO SET IT UP...
MURAHASHI WENT INSIDE THE LOCKER ROOM,
SO I WENT TO THE BACK TO SEE WHAT WAS GOING ON.
UH ...
UGH...
THAT'S WHEN MURAHASHI WAS KILLED.
...I GOT SCARED AND I WAS FROZEN IN PLACE.
AND THEN...
URGH.
UHH..

CLACK
Rattle
Rattle

THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

THEN..

I HEARD SOMEONE COMING OUT OF THE LOCKER ROOM, SO I FORCED MYSELF TO LOOK INSIDE ..

I SAW A BAR PLACED AT THE DOOR
I KNOW... I SAW IT WHEN I LOOKED THROUGH THE VENT AS WELL.
SO?

ISN'T IT... STRANGE?

....

AREN'T YOU SURPRISED?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN ...?
Womens Lockers
I WAS IN THE BACK...
BUT THE LOCK TO THE WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOM WAS STILL THERE...
WHEN THE BAR WAS ALREADY IN PLACE ...
THE CULPRIT LEFT THROUGH THE MEN'S LOCKER ROOM.

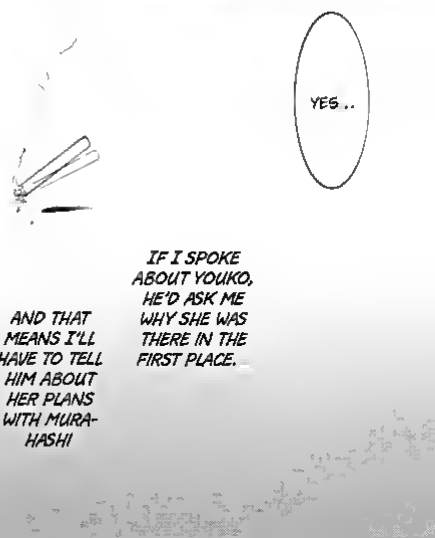
WHAT'S GOING ON?
SO IT TOOK YOU 40 MINUTES TO REPORT THE ATTACK.

... THANK YOU.
I'LL ASK AN OFFICER TO ESCORT YOU BACK HOME AS WELL.
... WELL,

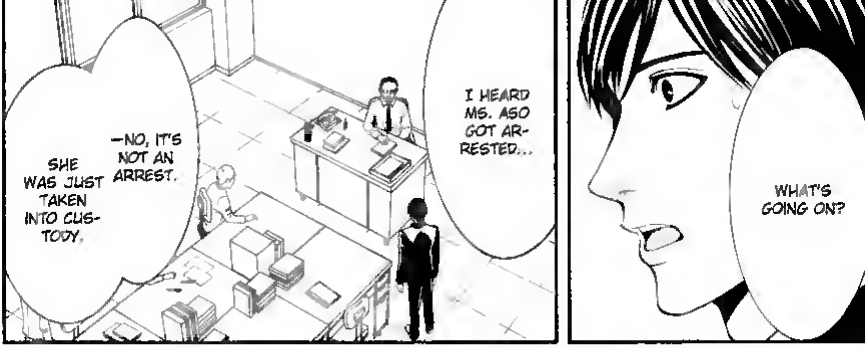
I'M SORRY.
I WAS TRYING TO CHASE AFTER IT AND GOT A TAXI, BUT I LOST SIGHT OF IT...
AND I PRETTY MUCH WASTED TIME TRYING TO DO THAT

PLEASE PROMISE ME THAT IF SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPENS AGAIN, YOU'LL NOTIFY ME IMMEDIATELY.

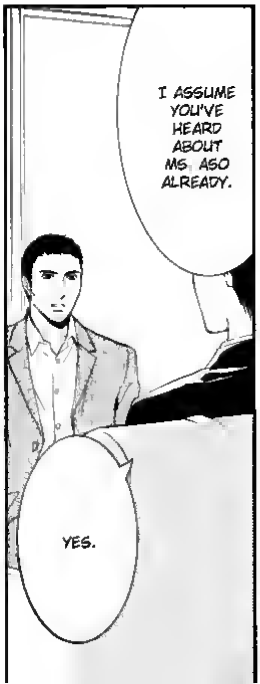
I DON'T WANT TO INVOLVE HER ANY MORE THAN SHE ALREADY IS...


YES ..
IF I SPOKE ABOUT YOUKO, HE'D ASK ME WHY SHE WAS THERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.
AND THAT MEANS I'LL HAVE TO TELL HIM ABOUT HER PLANS WITH MURAHASHI

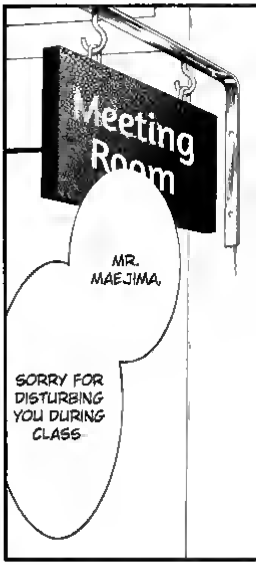
THE SUSPECT WAS QUITE CLUMSY THIS TIME.
SO THE CAR WAS A REDDISH SELENE WX...
BIG NEWS, YOU GUYS!!
MS. ASO GOT ARRESTED!!


I HEARD MS. ASO GOT ARRESTED...
—NO, IT'S NOT AN ARREST.
SHE WAS JUST TAKEN INTO CUSTODY.
WHAT'S GOING ON?

I GUESS A STUDENT MUST'VE MISUNDERSTOOD WHEN WE GOT A PHONE CALL FROM THE POLICE STATION.
BUT IT'S PRETTY MUCH AN ARREST, RIGHT?
THAT'S SAYING TOO MUCH.
REALLY?

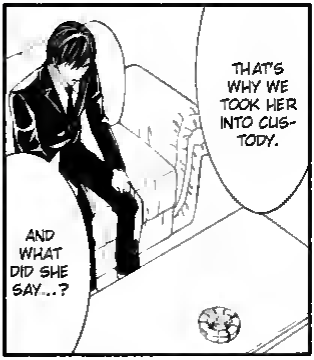

I ASSUME YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT MS. ASO ALREADY.
YES.

IT'S ALRIGHT I LEFT THEM WITH SELF STUDY.


Meeting Room
MR. MAEJIMA,
SORRY FOR DISTURBING YOU DURING CLASS

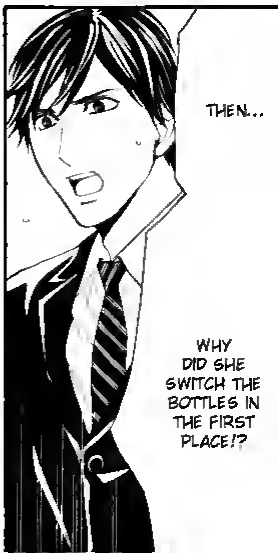
SHE WAS HOME FOR THAT. WE WERE WATCHING HER, SO THERE'S NO MISTAKE.
NO.
IS SHE SOMEHOW CONNECTED TO THAT CAR FROM TWO DAYS AGO?
YESTERDAY, ONE OF OUR YOUNG DETECTIVES FOUND WHITE GLOVES IN THE SCHOOL FURNACE.
THEN WHY..?
HUH..
IT WAS NAIL POLISH
THERE WERE BITS OF PAINT FROM THAT TRICK BOX ON THE GLOVES...
AND ON THE INSIDE, THERE ALSO WAS A RED, PAINT-LIKE SUB-STANCE.
YESTERDAY NIGHT, WE BORROWED HER NAIL POLISH,
AND TESTS PROVED THAT THEY WERE IN FACT THE SAME SUB-STANCE.

SHE DIDN'T TRY TO DENY IT.
SHE TOLD US EVERY-THING, EXCEPT ONE THING.


THAT'S WHY WE TOOK HER INTO CUS-TODY.
AND WHAT DID SHE SAY...?

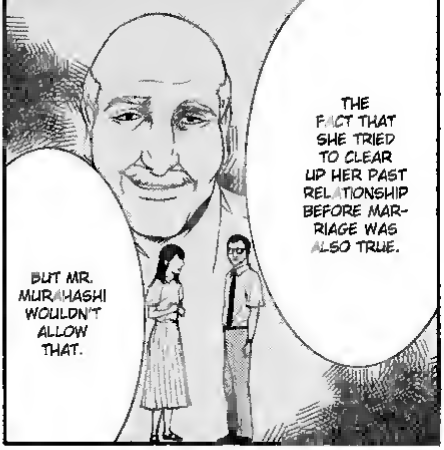
BUT THE ONE WHO TRIED TO KILL YOU WAS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSON.
...SHE WAS THE ONE WHO SWITCHED THE BOTTLES,

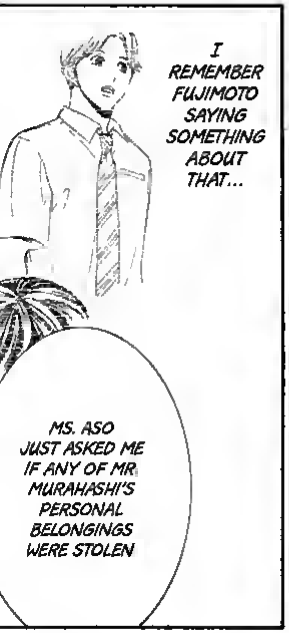
SHE WAS THREATENED BY THE SUSPECT.
SHE'S SAYING


THEN...
WHY DID SHE SWITCH THE BOTTLES IN THE FIRST PLACE!?

BEFORE, YOU TOLD ME THAT HER AND MR. MURAHASHI MIGHT'VE BEEN IN A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP, AND THAT TURNS OUT TO BE TRUE.
THREAT-ENED...?

IT SEEMS MR. MURAHASHI ALWAYS KEPT A SECRET "SOMETHING"
THAT PROVED HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HER.


THE FACT THAT SHE TRIED TO CLEAR UP HER PAST RELATIONSHIP BEFORE MARRIAGE WAS ALSO TRUE.
BUT MR. MURAHASHI WOULDN'T ALLOW THAT.


I REMEMBER FUJIMOTO SAYING SOMETHING ABOUT THAT...
MS. ASO JUST ASKED ME IF ANY OF MR. MURAHASHI'S PERSONAL BELONGINGS WERE STOLEN

IT MIGHT'VE BEEN THAT CONDOM, BUT IT'S DIFFICULT TO PROVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THAT...
SO WHEN HE WAS POISONED THAT DAY HE SHOULD'VE HAD IT ON HIM,
BUT NOTHING LIKE THAT CAME UP DURING THE SEARCH.
SO THE SUSPECT TOOK IT AWAY, HUH...

THIS IS A COPY.
SHE FOUND A LETTER IN HER DESK THAT BLACKMAILED HER INTO HER ACTIONS OF THAT DAY.
ON THE MORNING OF THE FESTIVAL,

I TOLD YOU AT THE START,
SHE TOLD US EVERYTHING, SAVE ONE THING.
THAT'S WHY I WANTED YOU TO GIVE SOME MORE THOUGHT TO WHO THE CULPRIT COULD BE.
"BECAUSE THE TRUTH LIES SOMEWHERE ELSE."
IN OTHER WORDS, SHE HELPED THE CULPRIT KNOWING THAT I WOULD GET KILLED IN THE PROCESS...
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH,
WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT IT IS.
WHAT'S THAT "SOMETHING" SHE WAS TALKING ABOUT?
THE SUSPECT MUST'VE HAD GLOVES ON,
AND WE CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHO IT WAS FROM THE HANDWRITING.
SO...

HOW'S THE SEARCH GOING?
WITH THAT SELENE WX...
THEY'RE DOING THEIR BEST, BUT NOTHING'S COME UP.
HAVE YOU BEEN TARGETED SINCE THEN?
NO, SINCE THE POLICE ARE ALL OVER ME.
.....
...THAT TRICK WITH THE LOCK,
ISN'T IT JUST A TRICK TO MISLEAD US?

LOOKING BACK... WHY WOULD THE SUSPECT HAVE TO MAKE THIS WHOLE THING A LOCKED ROOM MYSTERY?
IT COULD JUST BE TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE HE COMMITTED SUICIDE,
BUT LOOKING AT THE SUSPECT'S MOVES, IT DOESN'T SEEM THAT WAY.

HUH?

THAT'S WHAT I THINK.
BECAUSE THANKS TO THIS TRICK, THE SUSPECT HAS AN ADVANTAGE.

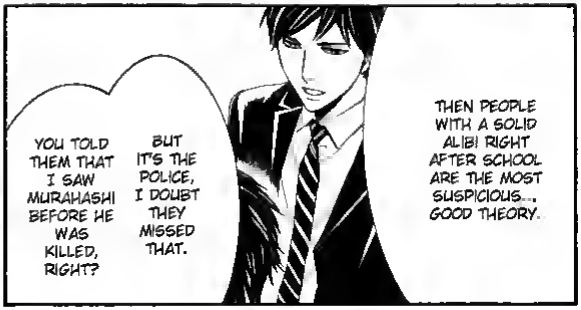
SO WOULDN'T THAT MEAN THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF IT WAS TO MAKE US FOCUS ON THAT TRICK?

THE CULPRIT MADE IT LOOK LIKE SOMEONE WENT OVER THAT WALL BETWEEN THE LOCKER ROOMS AND WET THE FLOOR..

THANKS TO THE TRICK, I HAVE AN ALIBI.
THINK ABOUT IT.
ADVANTAGE?

I GOT OFF THE HOOK BECAUSE I HAD AN ALIBI RIGHT AFTER SCHOOL,
BUT THAT WOULD HOLD TRUE FOR THE SUSPECT AS WELL...
THE PERSON THAT COULD SET UP THAT TRICK
IS "SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T HAVE AN ALIBI RIGHT AFTER SCHOOL".

...NO.

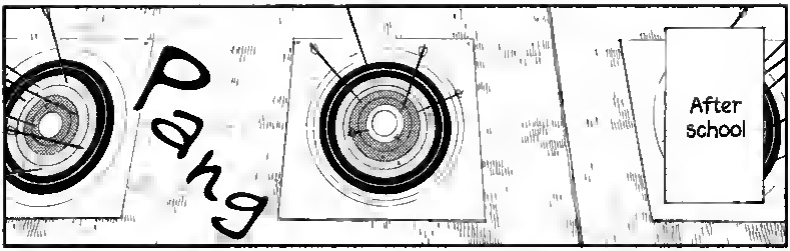

YOU TOLD THEM THAT I SAW MURAHASHI BEFORE HE WAS KILLED, RIGHT?
BUT IT'S THE POLICE, I DOUBT THEY MISSED THAT.
THEN PEOPLE WITH A SOLID ALIBI RIGHT AFTER SCHOOL ARE THE MOST SUSPICIOUS... GOOD THEORY.

...YOU DON'T WANT TO TELL THEM ABOUT ME TRYING TO MAKE HIM INTO A RAPIST, HUH?
...

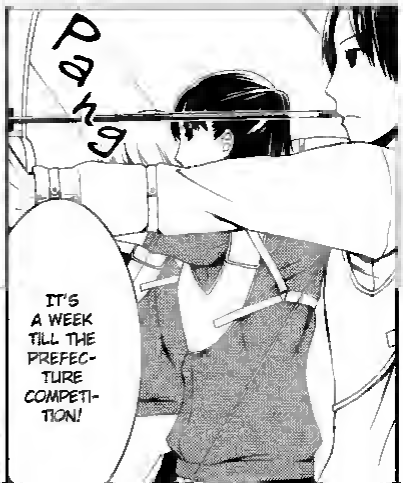
THEN THERE WAS NO POINT IN ME TELLING YOU ALL OF THAT!
WHAT?
WHY?

REALLY, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
EVERYONE ELSE THINKS I'M THAT KIND OF GIRL ANYWAYS...
BACK THEN, WHEN THE CAR CAME AFTER ME... WHY DID YOU CONFESS ALL OF THAT TO ME?
WEREN'T YOU ALWAYS TRYING TO AVOID ME?
BUT IT'S TRUE I'VE BEEN AVOIDING YOU. YOU DIDN'T TRY TO HELP ME.
I WAS WORRIED WHEN I FOUND OUT YOU WERE BEING TARGETED...
AND I THOUGHT YOU'D GET KILLED IF I DIDN'T TELL THE TRUTH ..
...I'M SORRY.

WHEN I THOUGHT YOU'D GET KILLED, I COULDN'T JUST SIT AROUND...
BUT... I COULDN'T DO IT.

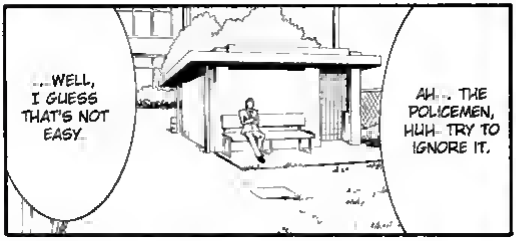

Pang
After school

DON'T THINK ABOUT ANY-THING, JUST KEEP ON SHOOTING!


Pang
IT'S A WEEK TILL THE PREFEC-TURE COMPETI-TION!

glance
FIGURES.. LOOKS LIKE I SHOULDN'T HAVE ASKED YOU TO COME TO THE CLUB.
PANG
PANG
CLANK
CLANK

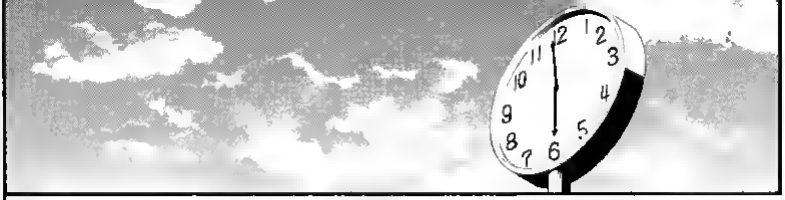
REMEMBER THE BASICS AND KEEP PRACTICING!

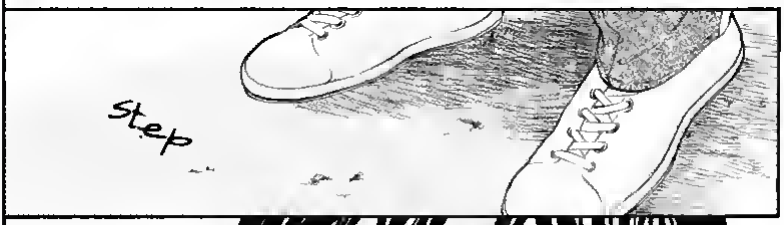

...WELL, I GUESS THAT'S NOT EASY.
AH... THE POLICEMEN, HUH. TRY TO IGNORE IT.

...I TOLD YOU, JUST HAVING YOU HERE IS GOOD ENOUGH.

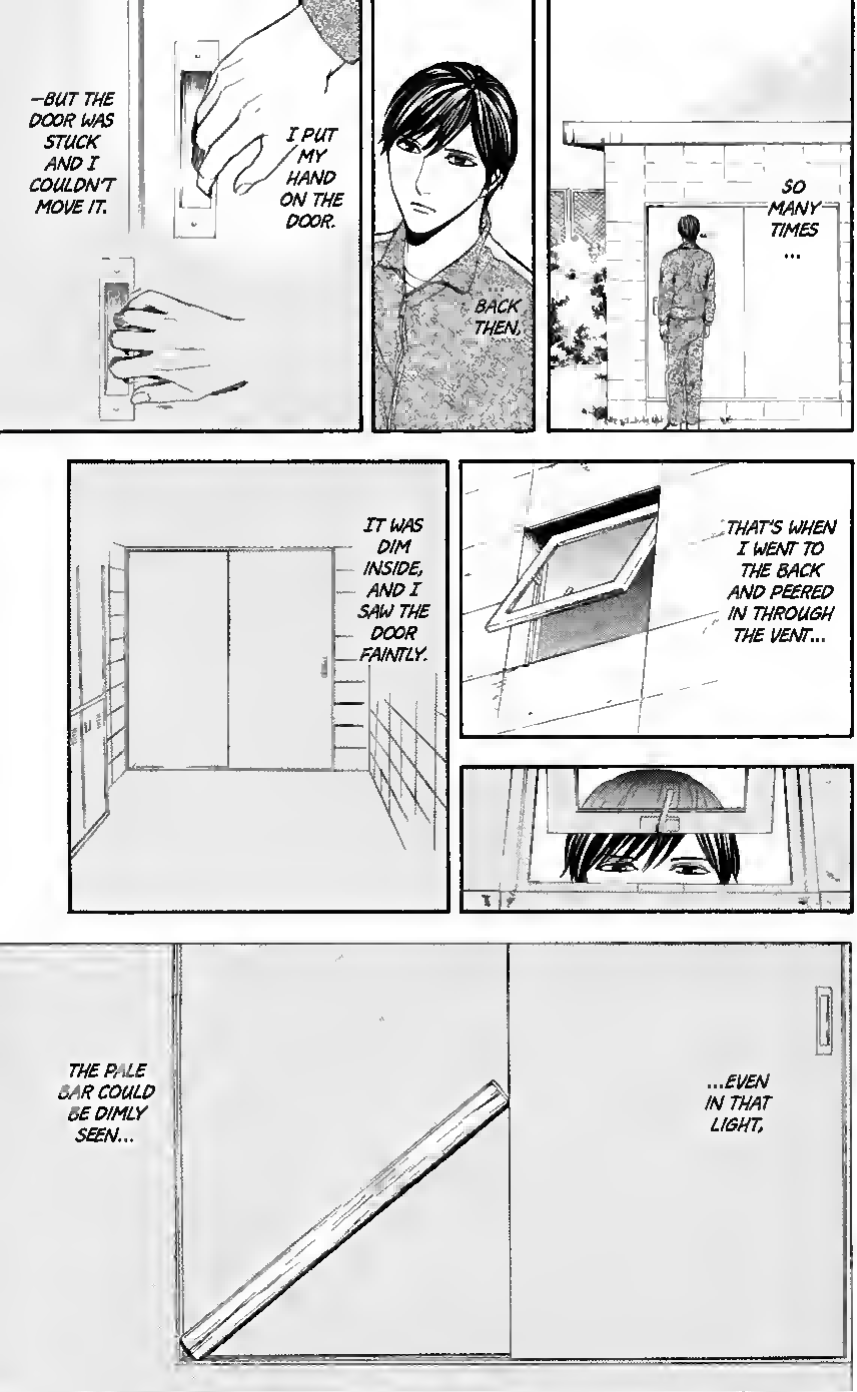
IT'S TIMES LIKE THIS THAT I NEED TO BE HERE,
THOUGH I HAVE TO APOLOGIZE ABOUT MY LACK OF COACHING.

NICE!
GOOD, MIYASAKA!
Pahg
MIYASAKA'S ON A ROLL.
Nice shot!
Nice!
I KNOW — WE HAD SOLO PRACTICE DURING LUNCH, AND SHE'S GETTING BETTER BY THE DAY.
THAT'S A MENTAL THING.
YOU SHOOT LIKE THAT WHEN YOU THINK OF IT AS BEING JUST A SPORT.
WELL, I THINK THAT WAY TOO.
IT'S NOT THE SAME AS LOOKING DOWN UPON IT.




Step

I'VE THOUGHT OVER THE LOCKED ROOM SCENARIO IN THE LOCKER ROOM SO MANY TIMES—
step
step


—BUT THE DOOR WAS STUCK AND I COULDN'T MOVE IT.
I PUT MY HAND ON THE DOOR.
BACK THEN,
SO MANY TIMES ...
IT WAS DIM INSIDE, AND I SAW THE DOOR FAINTLY.
THAT'S WHEN I WENT TO THE BACK AND PEERED IN THROUGH THE VENT...
THE PALE BAR COULD BE DIMLY SEEN...
...EVEN IN THAT LIGHT,

"THAT" BAR WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO POSITION FROM THE OUTSIDE.
DETECTIVE OHTANI MENTIONED
THEN...
AH, THANK YOU.
THUNK
06
Maejima

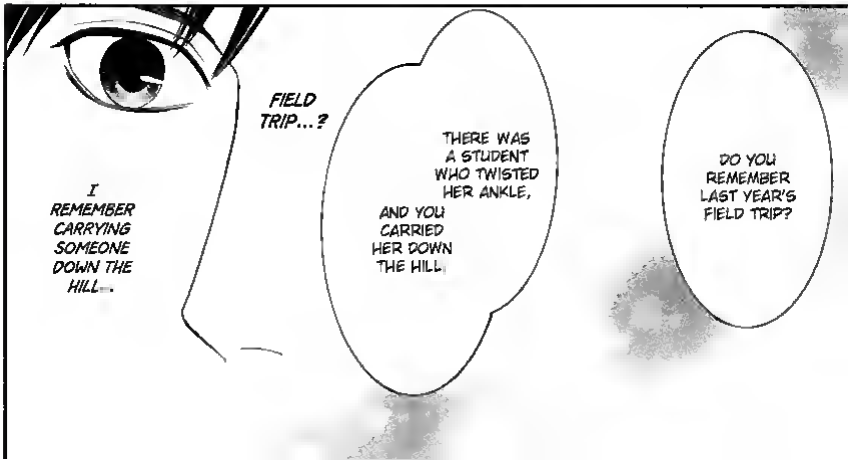
clack
...SO, WHAT'S THE MATTER?
slide
I CAME HERE TODAY TO TALK TO YOU AS A MAN, NOT A DETECTIVE.
THAT'S WHY I'D LIKE YOU TO LISTEN TO ME AS YOU WOULD A TEACHER.
MR. MAEJIMA,
UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES DO YOU THINK A HIGH SCHOOL GIRL WOULD HARBOR A GRUDGE?

TAKE THIS AS AN EXAMPLE.
INCIDENTS CONCERNING ADULTS USUALLY FIT INTO ONE OF THE THREE MOTIVES OF LUST, GREED OR MONEY.
...THAT'S A HARD QUESTION.
...
THAT MAY BE FRIENDSHIP OR LOVE, AT TIMES.
...BUT TO YOUNG GIRLS, THOSE THREE ARE FAR FROM THEIR REACH...
IT MAY EVEN BE THEIR OWN BODY OR FACE,
AND IN MANY CASES THEIR PRECIOUS MEMORIES OR DREAMS.
WHAT I THINK IS PRECIOUS TO THEM ARE BEAUTIFUL, PURE, AND INNOCENT THINGS.

SO ANYTHING THAT WOULD TAKE THOSE AWAY FROM THEM COULD BE CONSIDERED AN ENEMY.
AND THAT'S A MOTIVE.
THERE'S SOMETHING IMPORTANT MISSING FROM THE INVESTIGATION,
WHY DO YOU ASK?
I SEE ..
AND YOU WERE HELD IN HIGH REGARD.
I ASKED STUDENTS THAT YOU'VE TAUGHT,
THE REASON BEING YOU DIDN'T BEAR DOWN UPON THEM.
THERE'S NOTHING ABOUT YOU TO NOTE, SINCE YOU ALWAYS DISTANCED YOURSELF FROM THE STUDENTS.
MR. MURAHASHI MUST'VE BEEN THE TARGET OF GRUDGES SINCE HE WAS HEAD OF STUDENT DISCIPLINE ..
BUT YOU'RE DIFFERENT

THEY NICK-NAMED YOU "MACHINE".
SOME EVEN MENTIONED IT WAS A GOOD EXPERIENCE HAVING A TEACHER AS CALM AS YOU.
I SEE...
HOWEVER, THERE WAS ONE...

THERE WAS ONE STUDENT WHO SAID YOU MUST BE THE MOST COMPASSIONATE TEACHER THERE.


DO YOU REMEMBER LAST YEAR'S FIELD TRIP?
THERE WAS A STUDENT WHO TWISTED HER ANKLE, AND YOU CARRIED HER DOWN THE HILL.
FIELD TRIP...?
I REMEMBER CARRYING SOMEONE DOWN THE HILL...

"YOUR LEG WILL GET WORSE IF YOU KEEP HOBBLING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN LIKE THAT."
AH...

I FIGURED THE OPPOSITE COULD HAPPEN JUST AS EASILY.
...IF SOMETHING AS SMALL AS THAT COULD CAUSE A STUDENT TO LOVE YOU,
...I REMEMBER NOW.

YOUKO FORGAVE ME FOR EVERY-THING I DID BECAUSE OF THAT ONE INCIDENT...
I SEE ... IT WAS THAT TIME.

AND IF THAT WERE THE MOTIVE, WOULDN'T IT BE POSSIBLE FOR SOMEONE TO HELP OUT OF FRIEND-SHIP?
SO YOU'RE SAYING THAT SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL, PURE AND INNOCENT WAS TAKEN AWAY.

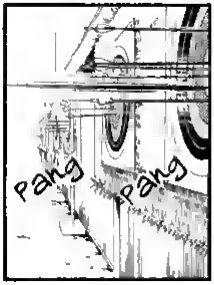
AND FOR THAT TO TIE INTO THE MURDER..

IT'S POSSIBLE.
...I THINK ...

MR. MAEJIMA ...
YOU KNOW,

SO SHE HAD... AN ACCOM-PLICE?

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE ENTIRE CAMPUS OF SEIKA WOMEN'S HIGH SCHOOL...
IS A SORT OF AN ACCOMPLICE TO THESE INCIDENTS.
Archery Prefectural Tournament
NOTHING'S GOING TO HAPPEN IF YOU LOSE YOUR COOL HERE!
AND SHOW ME HOW WELL YOU'VE TRAINED.
JUST KEEP SHOOTING,
ANYTHING TO ADD, MR. MAEJIMA?


Pang
Pang

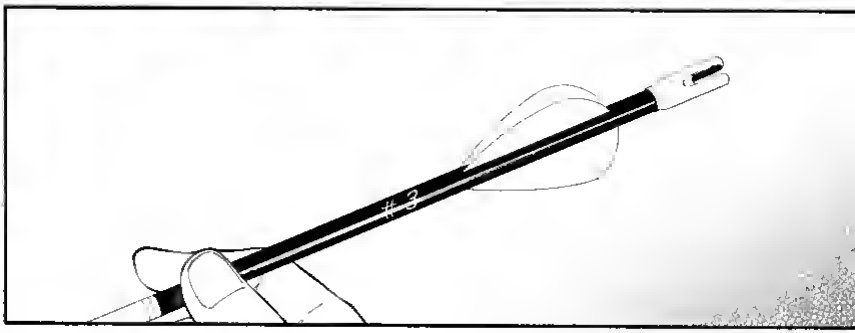
I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO SAY...
GOOD LUCK.

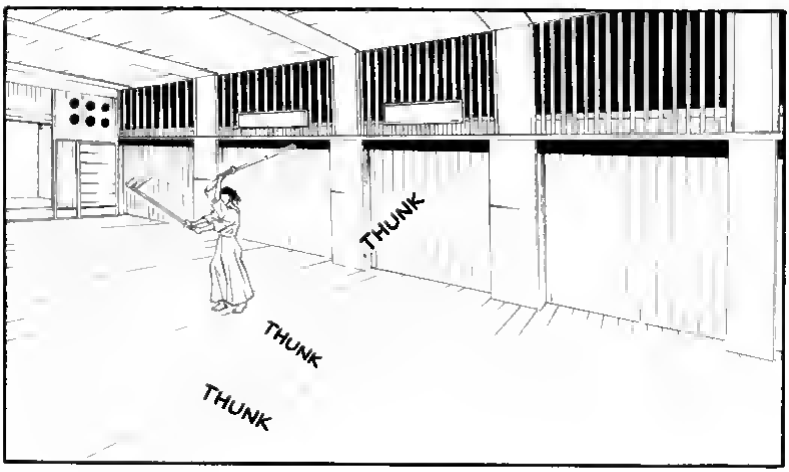
30 SECONDS.
AH..

22 POINTS? NOT BAD
I PUT TOO MUCH STRENGTH IN IT...
9, 7, AND 6 POINTS AT THE END, HUH ...

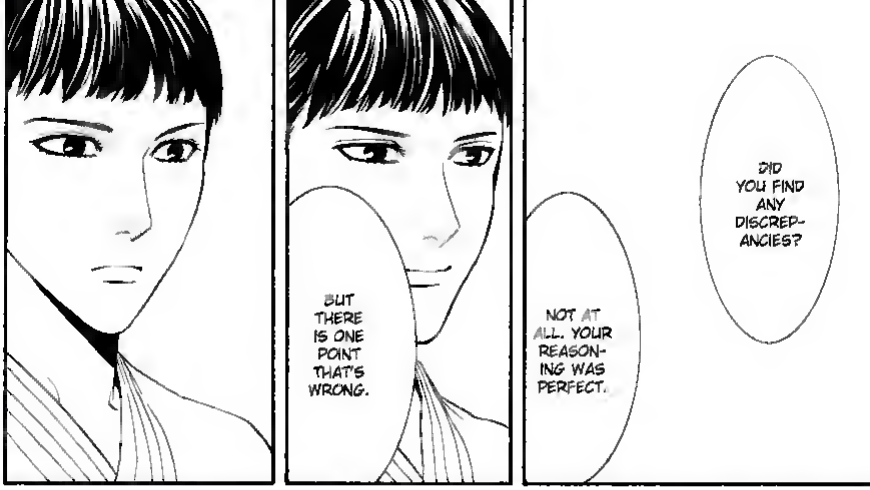
SHE'S FINE.
LOOK AT HER..
WHIP
Nice!
Nice shot, Kei!
AWESOME JOB, KEI-!
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN, MR MAEJIMA?
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN WATCHING KEI AT ALL TODAY, HAVE YOU?
AH, I NEED TO SWITCH ARROWS ...
click
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
JUST CONCENTRATE ON SHOOTING.

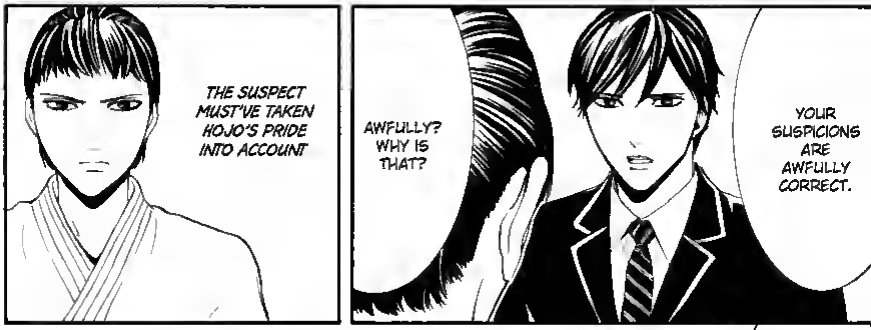
CAN I SEE THAT ARROW?
KANAE ..
HUH?


#3


THUNK
THUNK
THUNK

haa
haa
ヒュッ
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO STIFF.
SO, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK ABOUT?
THIS IS BETTER FOR ME.
THIS IS ABOUT ...
THAT LOCKED ROOM MURDER.


DID YOU FIND ANY DISCREP-ANCIES?
NOT AT ALL. YOUR REASON-ING WAS PERFECT.
BUT THERE IS ONE POINT THAT'S WRONG.


THE SUSPECT MUST'VE TAKEN HOJO'S PRIDE INTO ACCOUNT
AWFULLY? WHY IS THAT?
YOUR SUSPICIONS ARE AWFULLY CORRECT.

IS THAT THE SUSPECT COULDN'T HAVE LEFT THROUGH THE MEN'S DOOR.
THE ONLY INFORMATION I NEEDED..
YOU'RE VERY INTELLIGENT. YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD THE BEST GRADES SINCE COMING HERE.
BUT EVEN SO, YOU MANAGED TO MAKE SUCH IMPRES-SIVE DEDUC-TIONS.
THAT MEANS YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE THAT MUCH INFORMATION ON THE INCIDENT.
YOU HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE INCIDENT.
THE ONLY CONNECTION YOU HAD WAS THAT YOU WERE FRIENDS WITH TAKAHARA YOUKO.

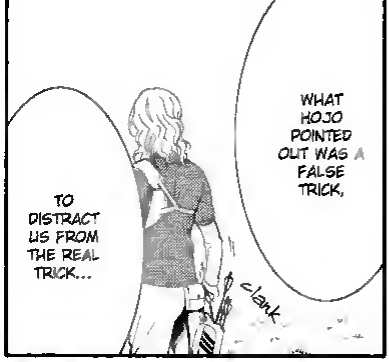
BUT IS THAT POSSIBLE FOR A NORMAL PERSON TO DO?
YOU SAID YOU FIGURED OUT MS. HORI'S LITTLE HABIT.
IF YOU ASKED IF IT'S IMPOSSIBLE WITH NORMAL REASONING.
I'D PREFER IT...
BUT IT MUST'VE BEEN HARD EVEN FOR A GENIUS LIKE YOU TO MAKE THAT REASONING WITH NO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF THE SURROUNDINGS.
...HOJO
DIDN'T YOU FIGURE OUT THE TRICK WITH HELP FROM SOMEONE ELSE?

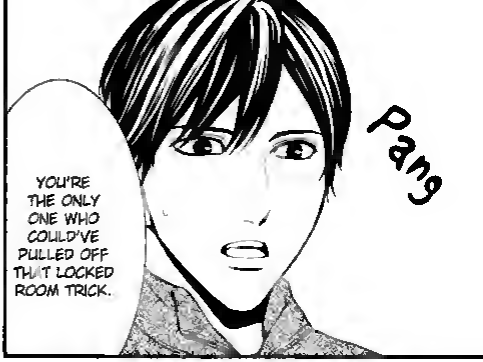
LIFT
swoosh
clank
clank
clank

IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE WE'VE TRAINED TOGETHER.
COACH ME WELL, SINCE I'M OFF TO THE NATIONALS.
Pang
I'LL GET BETTER MARKS THAN IN YESTERDAY'S COMPETITION.
CLANK
WHAT?
I WANT YOU TO TELL ME SOMETHING.
PULL
KEI.

WAS IT FRIGHTEN-ING...
TO KILL SOMEONE ...?

HUH—...
I'M NOT GOING TO TURN YOU IN. I JUST WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH.
YES, I AM...
Yawn
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THAT LAST INCIDENT?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE GETTING AT.
TELL ME THEN, WHY AM I A SUSPECT?
Pull


WHAT HOJO POINTED OUT WAS A FALSE TRICK,
TO DISTRACT US FROM THE REAL TRICK...
clank


YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD'VE PULLED OFF THAT LOCKED ROOM TRICK.
Pang

THEN WHAT DO YOU THINK I DID?

Men's Lockers
IT ALL COMES DOWN TO THE POSSIBILITY OF PUTTING THE BAR IN PLACE FROM THE OUTSIDE.
THE ANSWER WAS NO. EVEN THE POLICE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO EXERT SUCH A FORCE TO PUT THAT BAR IN PLACE FROM THE OUTSIDE.

I REALIZED THE TRICK WHEN I LOOKED FOR SOLID EVIDENCE
THAT THE SUSPECT ESCAPED THROUGH THE MEN'S SIDE INSTEAD OF THE WOMEN'S SIDE.
THIS IS BECAUSE THERE WAS A WITNESS YOU DIDN'T KNOW OF.

BUT WHAT IF ANOTHER BAR DID THE TRICK?
IT'S IMPOS-SIBLE TO PLACE THE BAR FROM THE OUTSIDE ..
THE POLICE WERE CORRECT.
ANOTHER BAR?
AN ARROW.

THAT WAS JUST A FAKE TO DISTRACT US.
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
EVEN YOU SAW THAT OLD PIECE OF WOOD BARRING THE DOOR!
ON THAT DOOR
THERE WERE TWO BARS PREVENTING THE DOOR FROM OPENING.
IT'S THE ARROW I GAVE YOU.
A BAR REQUIRING MINIMAL STRENGTH TO PUT INSIDE THE DOOR..
OR 72.4 CENTIMETERS.
THE OTHER BAR MUST'VE BEEN 28.5 INCHES,

YOU FIRST TIED A STRING OR WIRE TO THE ARROW, THEN PULLED THAT END BETWEEN THE DOOR AND WALL.
THEN YOU CAREFULLY LEANED THE TWO "BARS" ON THE DOOR AND SLOWLY CLOSED IT.
YOU MANIPULATED THAT ARROW USING THE STRING OR WIRE FROM THE BEGINNING,
AND CUT OFF THE END OF THAT SAID STRING OR WIRE.
IT'D BE HARD TO SEE THAT ARROW FROM THE OUTSIDE, SINCE IT'S INSIDE THE DOOR RAIL.
ESPECIALLY IN THAT DIMLY LIT ROOM.
PLUS..
IT'D BE EASY TO COLLECT AFTERWARDS.
THAT'S GOOD REASONING, BUT THERE'S NO PROOF.
WITHOUT PROOF...
I DO HAVE IT.

THE ARROW I GAVE YOU WAS #3.
CLANK
KE! ..
LOOK AT THE NUMBER PRINTED ON THE ARROW I GAVE YOU.
YOU CAME BACK WITH AN INNOCENT FACE AND COLLECTED THAT ARROW AFTER WE BROKE THE OTHER DOOR OPEN—
BEFORE YOU FOUND THE BODY, YOU RETURNED #3 TO MY CASE.
THE ONE YOU USED AS A BAR WAS THE ONE YOU'RE HOLDING NOW, #12.
BUT FOR SOME REASON KANAE HAD #3.
BESIDES, I WAS WITH YOU THE WHOLE TIME DURING THE CLUB MEETING!
BUT THAT'S JUST GUESS-WORK!
AFTER THAT, KANAE BEGGED FOR MY ARROW, AND SHE PICKED UP #3.
WHEN YOU CONSIDERED RETURNING #3 OR #12.
YOU DIDN'T EXPECT ME TO REMEMBER THE NUMBER YOU TOOK.

CREATING THE LOCKED ROOM SCENARIO. THAT WAS YOUR ROLE.
THE ONE WHO KILLED MURAHASHI ...
WAS EMI MIYASAKA.
Pahg
YOU'RE USUALLY STRICT ABOUT PRACTICE TIMES, BUT ON JUST THAT DAY YOU SECRETLY STRETCHED OUT THE BREAK 5 MINUTES.
IT'S BECAUSE THE MAIN CULPRIT, EMI MIYASAKA, DIDN'T COME BACK FOR A WHILE.

THE REASON WHY YOU WANTED IT TO LOOK LIKE A LOCKED ROOM
WAS TO CONFUSE THE POLICE
THAT'S WHY YOU SET UP ALL THOSE TRICKS
BUT THERE'S NO GUARANTEE THAT THE POLICE WOULD BE MISLED.
SO YOU LOOKED FOR SOMEONE WHO WOULD VALIDATE THAT FAKE TRICK— TAKAHARA YOUKO'S BEST FRIEND.
YOU THOUGHT HOJO MASAMI WOULD PLAY THAT PART.
BUT IT WASN'T DIRECTLY TO ME. IT WAS TO THE GIRL SITTING NEXT TO ME.
SUGITA WAS THE ONE WHO MENTIONED MS. HORI'S HABIT.
SHE DIDN'T OVERHEAR IT. YOU LET HER HEAR IT.
NEXT IS THE CLOWN INCIDENT. BUT THERE'S SOMETHING I STILL DON'T KNOW ...
THE MOTIVE.
I THOUGHT ABOUT IT, BUT THERE'S NOTHING THAT WOULD CAUSE ME TO BE A TARGET.

YOU WEREN'T TARGETING ME.
YOU WERE TARGETING MR. TAKEI, WHO EVERYONE THOUGHT OF AS AN UNFORTUNATE VICTIM.
THERE WAS NO REASON TO KILL ME
THEN I THOUGHT OF IT A DIFFERENT WAY...
BUT THERE WAS A REASON TO KILL THE CLOWN.
SINCE "MR. MURAHASHI AND MR TAKEI" WERE ALL TOO OBVIOUS..
THE THREE TIMES I WAS TARGETED SINCE THE START OF SECOND SEMESTER WERE TO TRICK PEOPLE INTO THINKING "MR MURAHASHI AND I" WERE THE TARGETS
SO THERE WOULD BE ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES FOR THE KILLER
I ALSO THINK THAT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SPREAD THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE COSTUMES,
YOU WERE PROBABLY THE ONE WHO SUGGESTED TO MR. TAKEI THAT WE SWITCH PLACES
KEI... WHAT HAPPENED THAT NIGHT?
IT WAS DURING THE SUMMER MEET.

I TRIED TO FIGURE OUT WHAT HAPPENED BY LOOKING AT THE CLUB LOGS...
AND I REMEMBERED THAT MIYASAKA WAS ABSENT ONE DAY.
I HEARD SHE HAD HER PERIOD, BUT LATER FOUND OUT SHE INJURED HER WRIST.
BUT I GOT A TOTALLY UNEXPECTED ANSWER FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE, MS. SHIGA
AROUND 11PM THAT NIGHT, SUGITA CAME TO MY ROOM ...
AND SHE ASKED ME TO COME TO MIYASAKA'S ROOM, BECAUSE SHE WASN'T FEELING WELL.
WHEN I WENT TO HER ROOM,
THERE WAS BLOOD-STAINED PAPER AND CLOTH SCATTERED ABOUT.
...I KNEW I HAD TO KEEP HER SECRET.

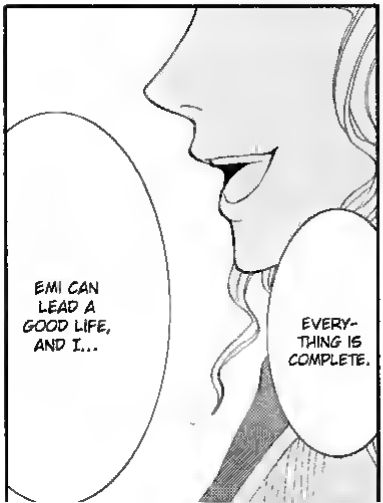
BUT I THINK SHE... TRIED TO COMMIT SUICIDE...
FOR EMI TO LIVE...
THOSE TWO NEEDED TO DIE
EMI HAD IT BEFORE THE INCIDENT. SHE SAID SHE BORROWED IT FROM A FRIEND WHO USED IT IN HIS PHOTOGRAPHY.
AND HOW DID YOU GET THE CYANIDE?
IT'S BECAUSE HE HAD A PROMISE WITH TAKAHARA ...
I LEFT A NOTE IN MURAHASHI'S COAT TO CALL HIM OUT,
BUT I NEVER EXPECTED HIM TO ACTUALLY COME, SINCE EMI DIDN'T WRITE HER NAME IN IT.
.....

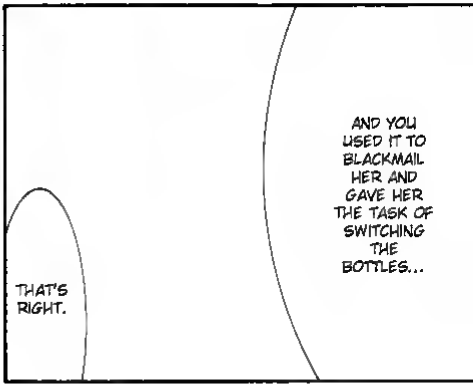
SINCE THERE MIGHT COME A TIME WHEN I HAVE TO USE IT, TOO.

I'D LOVE TO HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
WHY WOULD SHE HAVE SUCH A THING...

IT WAS A PHOTO
OF MS. ASO SLEEPING NAKED IN BED.

WHEN EMI WENT TO COLLECT THE LETTER, WE GOT AN UNEXPECTED SURPRISE.


EMI CAN LEAD A GOOD LIFE, AND I...
EVERY-THING IS COMPLETE.


THAT'S RIGHT.
AND YOU USED IT TO BLACKMAIL HER AND GAVE HER THE TASK OF SWITCHING THE BOTTLES...

WHAT WAS YOUR MOTIVE?
PAT
PEEKING ...THAT WAS THE MOTIVE?
BUT... THAT'S NOTHING TO KILL SOMEONE OVER..
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?
MURAHASHI AND TAKEI WERE PEEKING INTO EMI'S ROOM WHILE SHE WAS IN BED.
...THAT NIGHT.
WHEN I WAS IN THE CAFETERIA WITH YOU.

WHAT IF EMI WAS MASTURBATING WHEN THEY DID?
haa...
haa...
ha...

CREAK
squeak
squeak
squeak

I CAN'T BLAME HER FOR IT,
BECAUSE I PROBABLY WOULD'VE DONE THE SAME ..
OUT OF SHAME AND EMBAR-RASSMENT.
EMI TRIED TO KILL HERSELF
EMI-..
IT'S LIKE THEY'RE RAPING ME WITH THEIR EYES..
THEY LOOK AT ME DIFFER-ENTLY THAN THE OTHER STUDENTS.
I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY-MORE.

...I HAVE SODIUM CYANIDE IN FRONT OF ME NOW.
SHOULD I DRINK IT?

IT'S THOSE TWO THAT HAVE TO DIE, NOT YOU!!
EMI!!
DON'T DO THIS!!
SWOOSH

THAT CAR THAT CAME AFTER ME RIGHT AFTER THE FESTIVAL ...WAS THAT YOUR DOING AS WELL?
GO AHEAD.
...CAN I ASK YOU TWO THINGS?
SINCE I TOLD HER TO TARGET YOU AGAIN AFTER THAT CLOWN INCIDENT.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT IT. BUT IT MIGHT'VE BEEN EMI,
.....
THEN HERE'S MY LAST QUESTION.
WAS IT FRIGHTENING TO KILL SOMEONE?
I'LL ASK YOU AGAIN.

WE HAVE THINGS WE MUST PROTECT, EVEN IF IT COSTS US OUR LIVES.

Creak
WELL THEN, YOU SHOULD COACH ME LIKE YOU SAID YOU WOULD.
Pow
THERE'S NOTHING MORE I CAN TEACH YOU GUYS...
HELLO, MAEJIMA RESIDENCE.

I'LL REST A BIT BEFORE I GO BACK... ALRIGHT
YES... I'M BY MYSELF I LEFT THE POLICE THERE

SO I'M AT THE PARK CLOSE BY.
HELLO? IS THIS YUMIKO?
IT'S ME. I DRANK A LITTLE ...

... HAA

VROOM

HOW STUPID ...

Click
Vroom
step
step
THUD
Clack
step

Slide
SERIZAWA!
RIGHT... HE'S THE MANAGER OF THE STORE WHERE SHE WORKS...
... YUMIKO ...? SERIZAWA ...?
...I SEE.

I TOOK EVERYTHING AWAY FROM YUMIKO...
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT,
VROOM...
drag
drag
AND... CHILDREN.
FREEDOM, EXCITEMENT,
BUT—
grab
I CAN HOLD OUT, EVEN IF THAT'S ALL I CAN DO.
drag
OR ELSE SHE'LL BECOME A CRIMINAL ...
I CAN'T DIE HERE.

—SO MUCH
SEEMS TO
HAPPEN
AFTER SCHOOL.

~END~

Special Thanks

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Yoko Saegusa

Yukie Shishido

Yuko Hannuki

Shizuka Ozaki

Taiki Nishikawa

Yu Hoshino

FROM THE AUTHOR

I WROTE THIS BACK WHEN I WAS IMMATURE, BUT IT'S A WORLD I CAN'T WRITE ANYMORE. THAT IMMATURITY WAS GREATLY SUPPORTED WITH THESE AMAZING GRAPHICS, AND MADE THIS A FUN READ.

HIGASHINO KEIGO

PROFILE: BORN IN 1958, IN OSAKA. WON THE EDOGAWA RANPO AWARD IN 1985 FOR "AFTER SCHOOL". WON THE JAPANESE MYSTERY NOVEL AWARD IN 1999 FOR "SECRET". WON THE 134TH NAOKI AWARD WITH "THE DEVOTION OF SUSPECT X". A BEST-SELLING AUTHOR WITH TOP SELLERS LIKE "DETECTIVE GALILEO", "THE WANDERING KNIFE" AND "NEWCOMER".

HOUKAGO

CHAPTER 2

BY SHIMOTSUKI KAYOKO
& HIGASHINO KEIGO

THE END

SCANNER KUINNI
TRANSLATOR DELILARYN
CLEANER MITSUGI
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